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NIGERIA ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

This Election Management Bodies Assessment in Nigeria was conducted by a team of international and local consultants fielded and managed by The Cloudburst Group, namely Gavin Weise (Team Lead), Dr. Nicholas Kerr (Academic Lead), Mr. Lazarus Msaaga Apir and Ms. Adebanye Ilori (Local Election Specialists), Ms. Iember Amah and Mr. Emem Udoh (Local Quantitative Research Assistants), Ryan Hatano (Analyst), and Aleta Starosta (Evaluation Specialist).

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASUU	Academic Staff Union of Universities
AT	Assessment Team
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance, and Elections
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVR	Continuous Voter Registration
CT-DASS	Compliance and Threat Data Acquisition and Sharing System
ECES	European Center for Electoral Support
EMB	Election Management Body
EMS	Election Management System
EMSC	Election Management Support Center or Election Monitoring and Support Center
EOSC	Electoral Operations Support Center
EPP	Election Project Plan
EPT	Election Petition Tribunal
EU	European Union
EVER	Election Violence Education and Resolution
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FOSIECON	Forum of State Independent Electoral Commissions of Nigeria
ICCES	Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Electoral Security
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IRI	International Republican Institute
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IREV	INEC Result Viewing Portal
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NES	National Expert Survey
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NOA	National Orientation Agency
NRSC	National Road Safety Corps
NURTW	National Union of Road Transport Workers

NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
PVC	Permanent voters card
PVT	Parallel Vote Tabulations
PWD	Persons with disabilities
REC	Resident Electoral Commissioner
SCR	Smart Card Reader
SERP	Support for Electoral Reforms Project
SES	State Expert Survey
SIEC	State Independent Electoral Commission
TEI	The Electoral Institute
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
YIAGA	Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth, and Advancement

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ASSESSMENT PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to understand and assess the performance of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) in Nigeria over the past decade, with a focus on the period corresponding to the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Support for Electoral Reforms Project (SERP). The assessment explores how USAID/Nigeria should redefine its relationship with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs) to prioritize its assistance through strategic and targeted investments in advance of the 2023 general elections.

The assessment is guided by four key research questions:

- How have stakeholder perceptions of the electoral process in Nigeria changed since the 2007 general elections?
- How have the INEC's and SIECs' management and administration of elections since 2007 impacted electoral integrity?
- What investments in INEC, SIECs, and other stakeholders made by SERP have been the most effective in improving electoral integrity and the quality of elections in Nigeria?
- What are the opportunities for USAID/Nigeria to invest strategically in election management and administration moving forward?

These research questions were further divided into 15 sub-questions, which together investigated changes in trust levels and credibility of Nigerian EMBs and election processes, and the specific USAID interventions that contributed to improved electoral management. They also explored potential directions for continued USAID/Nigeria technical support to EMBs and elections in Nigeria.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Following the 2007 general elections (widely considered to be among Nigeria's most flawed elections in recent memory¹), the 2011 elections saw improvements both in election administration and the overall credibility of the electoral process. This was due in part to the government's commitment to electoral reforms, which culminated in the 2010 Electoral Act. Reforms continued in the post-election period, including the completion of new systems for voter registration and voter identification through biometrics. These improvements and others were then implemented in the next general elections in 2015, which were assessed positively by independent observer groups.² In addition to improving technical aspects of election administration, the 2015 elections were made more credible by the acceptance of results and the peaceful transfer of power from the governing party to the opposition.

At the same time, there were several lingering deficiencies in election administration, including an uneven distribution of permanent voters cards (PVCs), malfunctioning card readers, inefficient counting procedures, and the lack of transparent results collation and announcement processes. There was also a widespread expectation that electoral reforms would be enacted post-2015 to address these issues and build on the success of the general elections. However, stakeholders were greatly disappointed in repeated failures to adopt further amendments to the Electoral Act and the persistence of many of these same issues during the 2019 general elections. Moreover, INEC's last-minute decision to postpone the 2019 elections just hours before voting was to commence, due to delays in the distribution of election materials, further undermined stakeholder confidence in its ability to manage elections. Finally, the increased level of election violence and insecurity as well as pervasive vote-buying also undermined the credibility of the 2019 elections.

¹ See, for example, Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Final Report 2007, and National Democratic Institute, Election Observation Mission, Final Report 2007.

² See, for example, the European Union (EU) Election Observation Nigeria 2015, Final Report.

Some nine months later, Nigerian's expectations for improved elections based on the difficult lessons and experiences of the 2019 general elections were further dashed as off-cycle gubernatorial contests in Kogi and Bayelsa States were marred by violence and thuggery, widespread vote-buying, inflated turnouts, and questions over cancellations of results.

Against this backdrop, citizens headed into several important off-cycle and by-elections in 2020 with serious questions about the future of election credibility in Nigeria.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

The Assessment Team (AT) carried out desk-based research in July and August 2020, which included relevant background literature, activity documents, prior assessment studies and analyses, and election observation mission reports, as well as analyses of public opinion survey data. Remote field research took place over a nine-week period between September and November 2020 and involved qualitative, semi-structured interviews with representatives of INEC and SIECs, SERP implementers, USAID, other donors and partners, political parties, civil society, and other key institutions. A national- and state-level expert survey looked at the quality of election management across time (2007–2019) and across Nigeria's 36 states for the 2019 elections. The state-level survey also assessed the quality of SIECs and local council elections.

STAKEHOLDER EVALUATIONS OF INEC, SIECS, AND THE CREDIBILITY OF ELECTIONS

Overall, the AT found strong appreciation among stakeholders of the many challenges in managing elections in Nigeria. The size of the country, the sheer number of elections, diverse electorate, and a “win at all costs” approach by political parties and candidates together contribute to making Nigeria one of the most challenging environments in the world to administer elections. Stakeholders positively assessed the work of the Election Commission in managing Nigeria's federal and state elections and recognized improvements in the areas of voter registration, accreditation of voters, logistics management, and voter education, among others. Stakeholders also believed that INEC is managing relationships effectively with external institutions that support election processes, including security agencies, and continues to identify and improve its responsiveness to problems in operations and logistics. Many also appreciated INEC's ability to introduce new, complex electoral technologies on a massive scale.

These positive assessments notwithstanding, stakeholders pointed to numerous challenges that continue to threaten electoral credibility in Nigeria. These consist of internal challenges affecting INEC's operations and management, as well as several external factors that are in many respects beyond the control of EMBs, including party primary processes, rampant vote-buying, electoral violence, and the investigation of electoral offenses. Perceptions of SIECs' credibility and local council elections were lower among both key interlocutors and survey respondents due to SIECs' lack of independence, funding challenges, and the irregularity of the election cycle at the local level, which were consistently cited among the most fundamental and pressing problems facing these institutions.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT IN INEC, SIECS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The AT concluded that many of the issues affecting the credibility of elections and election management will require legal reforms. USAID should combine any capacity-building support with activities that further technical expertise or advocacy for legal reform processes within the framework of any future cooperation with EMBs and other electoral actors in Nigeria.

USAID should assist INEC with the review of its organizational and workforce needs with an aim to understand staffing gaps and redundancies, ill-suited or ill-defined job descriptions, and under- or over-funded departments and activities. USAID should also consider support for the post-2021 strategic

planning process to assist INEC in identifying future internal operations and election management priorities. Depending on the level of USAID's engagement with SIECs, such activities could also be included in any SIEC assistance programs.

Multiple INEC officials pointed to the need to improve basic management skills and election operations know-how, particularly at the local level. USAID programs can strengthen INEC capacities in partnership with The Electoral Institute (TEI) through new curricula and training programs for these staff. USAID could also support INEC's research and analytical capacities, including within TEI, equipping the organization with the means to carry out its own research to better understand and address systemic election issues, improve voter education and training, and propose reforms that build election integrity and credibility. USAID should also continue to support INEC's development and application of tracking and management tools to improve election logistics.

While interlocutors pointed to an improvement in INEC's communications and overall transparency, USAID should continue technical assistance to develop INEC's capacity to communicate more effectively with key stakeholders such as media, civil society, political parties, and the public through sustained support for media engagement, strategic messaging, and crisis communications. USAID could also support INEC's management and presentation of data on different platforms to improve accessibility, including using open data. Dispelling fake news and helping to shape narratives should also be included in any future communications and outreach support.

There will be several opportunities in the coming years to support EMBs with new technologies in election management spanning most areas of elections, including logistics management; communications; voter registration; and the tabulation, collation, and publication of results. USAID programs should focus on the planning process—prioritizing where technology can and should be used, evaluating solutions, and identifying staffing needs to successfully implement new election management technology. Assistance should also support INEC's capacity to sensitize key stakeholders on new electoral technologies, develop specialized training programs, and solicit stakeholder feedback on the performance of piloted or recently adopted technologies.

USAID activities in support of SIECs will be challenged by both their numbers and the depths of their needs. Continued work with SIECs should revolve around increased advocacy and support for legal reforms to improve SIECs' budget autonomy, independence and tenure of their Commissioners, and the regularity of local council elections. USAID might also consider supporting a handful of the 36 SIECs in a "model SIEC" program or focusing its assistance through the Forum of State Independent Electoral Commissions of Nigeria (FOSIECON).

Even the best-executed election in Nigeria will not be credible absent the partnership and cooperation of other key institutions and actors, including security agencies, the judiciary, and political parties. Future election assistance programs should incorporate these actors through working with INEC and TEI and providing direct assistance potentially through other programs and partners. Support should also be sustained throughout the electoral cycle and be combined with diplomatic engagement. Civil society will continue to play an important role in research and advocacy for reforms that can lead to strengthened capacities and greater independence of INEC and SIECs, as well as providing added oversight through monitoring activities.

1.0 ASSESSMENT PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

Problems with Nigeria's 2019 general elections and subsequent off-cycle elections highlight a pressing need for continued assistance to the country's electoral stakeholders to address vulnerabilities and strengthen the implementation of electoral processes. Examining how the USAID supports EMBs—the INEC and SIECs, in particular—is critical to understanding how such assistance can be improved prior to future electoral events in Nigeria, including the 2023 general elections.

The purpose of this research is to understand and assess the performance of EMBs in Nigeria over the past decade, with a focus on the period corresponding to USAID's SERP in Nigeria.³ The assessment explores how USAID/Nigeria can redefine its relationship with INEC and SIECs to prioritize its assistance and target strategic investments in advance of the 2023 general elections.

Based on the observations and preliminary conclusions reached during background research, as well as the literature review and preliminary data analysis, USAID/Nigeria and the AT identified the following research questions and sub-questions:

1. How have **stakeholder perceptions** of the electoral process in Nigeria changed since the 2007 general elections?
 - a. Is there increased, decreased, or the same level of *trust in INEC and SIECs* since the 2007 elections? Why?
 - b. Is there increased, decreased, or the same level of trust in *the credibility of the electoral process* since the 2007 elections? Why?
 - c. Are there *specific aspects of INEC's and SIECs' work* that elicit more satisfaction or dissatisfaction from stakeholders?
2. How have the INEC's and SIECs' **management and administration of elections** since 2007 impacted electoral integrity?
 - a. Which *operational improvements* introduced to the electoral process by INEC and SIECs have been shown to have had an impact on stakeholder perceptions of the credibility of the electoral process?
 - b. How have INEC's and SIECs' management of *relationships with other institutions* essential to electoral management and administration (i.e., police, army, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, National Youth Service Corps [NYSC], National Orientation Agency [NOA], National Union of Road Transport Workers [NURTW], etc.) affected electoral integrity?
 - c. What key internal and external *challenges* have INEC and SIECs been facing in addressing electoral integrity issues in Nigerian elections?
3. What **investments in INEC, SIECs, and other stakeholders** made by SERP have been the most effective in improving electoral integrity and the quality of elections in Nigeria?
 - a. How have *internal operations* of INEC, SIECs, and other stakeholders been strengthened by SERP?
 - b. How have *electoral processes* been strengthened through SERP?
 - c. How *sustainable* are these efforts for future electoral events?
 - d. What have been the *main challenges* in instituting changes by INEC and SIECs supported by SERP?
 - e. Are there *current activities and areas of focus* of SERP that will be important to continue beyond 2021?
4. What are the opportunities for USAID/Nigeria to **invest strategically in election management and administration** moving forward?
 - a. How should USAID *continue technical support to INEC and SIECs*?

³ SERP ran from April 1, 2014 through April 30, 2019 and was implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) with several Nigerian sub-partner organizations. SERP II began on April 1, 2019 and runs through March 31, 2021 (also implemented by IFES).

- b. Outside of INEC and SIECs, are there *other key actors or areas* related to election management that USAID should include in any future support?
- c. What *types of assistance* would be most beneficial to INEC, SIECs, and other stakeholders related to election management?
- d. What are the *emerging external factors and challenges* that will affect any future USAID investments in election management?

2.0 ASSESSMENT METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

The methodology for this assessment is based on a combination of desk-based research, individual key informant interviews, a review of existing survey data, and an online survey of key experts familiar with Nigerian elections and EMBs.

The desk-based research included a literature review of relevant background literature, activity documents, prior assessment studies and analyses, and prior election observation mission reports, as well as the AT's analysis of existing IFES public opinion survey data.⁴ Following this review, remote field research was conducted over nine weeks, from September 10 to November 17, 2020. Interviews were conducted over Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Meet, and by telephone. Additional documents were also reviewed during this period.

Remote field research involved qualitative semi-structured interviews with 47 interlocutors representing INEC and SIECs, SERP implementing partners, USAID, other international donors and partners, political parties, civil society organizations (CSOs), and other relevant institutions. A complete list of key informants can be found in Appendix 3. Each interview was guided by several questions selected from a question bank developed and included in the approved Desk Review Report.

To supplement the document review and interviews, and to fill any gaps in the existing IFES public opinion data, the AT conducted an online National Expert Survey (NES) and State Expert Survey (SES). The expert surveys allowed the AT to develop indicators on current perceptions of the quality of election management that can be compared across time (2007–2019) for all of Nigeria's recent national and state elections and across sub-national units (Nigeria's 36 states, grouped into six geopolitical zones) for the 2019 elections. The SES survey also assessed the quality of SIECs and local council elections.

The sample frame for the expert survey comprised three categories of experts: 1) domestic civil society and international non-governmental organization professionals with experience in election observation, democracy promotion, and governance; 2) local and internationally based academics trained in a social science-related field, particularly those with experience conducting research on politics and governance-related issues in Nigeria; and 3) seasoned media professionals with experience reporting on elections and political processes in Nigeria. The AT developed a database of these national and state-level experts using several approaches, including incorporating existing databases previously developed by CSOs, media, and academic professional organizations. To the extent possible, the database included representatives of historically marginalized groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and religious and ethnic minorities.

Expert Survey Sample

National Survey (N=55)

25 CSO

21 Academics

9 Media

Of which

10 women

5 youth

State Survey (N=625)

338 CSO

162 Academics

125 Media

Of which

188 women

219 youth

Key Informants

10 INEC

6 SIECs

9 USAID/SERP partners

5 Political parties

4 Additional CSOs

7 International partners

4 USAID

2 Other state agencies

⁴ The final Desk Review is included as Annex 1.

Findings from these surveys are referenced where relevant in the report, particularly in Research Questions 1 and 2.

At the conclusion of fieldwork, the AT presented initial findings to USAID/Nigeria. The AT also held three workshops on the assessment findings with representatives of INEC, SERP implementing partners, CSOs, and the donor community.

TERMINOLOGY

As the assessment drew upon data from several research tools, the AT tried to be consistent in the use of terminology to describe the research subject. Informant interviews generally refer to stakeholders, informants, or interlocutors, while the NES and SES employ the terms “experts” or “respondents” to attribute findings. The term “the public” is typically used to identify instances where IFES public opinion surveys are referenced.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The assessment scope was broad, including both qualitative and quantitative research on the credibility of electoral processes as well as the performance of national- and state-level EMBs over multiple election cycles. It also incorporated elements of a review of multi-year USAID programs and provided recommendations for potential assistance strategies moving forward. While not insurmountable, in some instances the broad scope limited the depth at which the AT could pursue particular issues and lines of inquiry. Nevertheless, the information gathered by the AT was sufficient and satisfactory to fulfill the assessment’s purpose and intended outcomes.

Similarly, it was important to include a wide range of key informant groups in the qualitative fieldwork. While the AT sought participation from each group, this also limited the number of questions the AT could ask on certain topics. This issue proved particularly acute regarding Research Question 3, which made it difficult to confirm the results and impact of SERP beyond activity documents. To attempt to support some of the conclusions about activities, at least indirectly, the AT cited election observer findings and results of the surveys where relevant.

While the AT sought to obtain information on SIECs as well as INEC in response to several research questions (including asking in the SES about SIEC activity), this was not always possible. Most interlocutors chose to focus their comments solely on INEC or simply could not provide much insight on SIECs. The scope of the assessment also limited the number of qualitative and quantitative questions that could focus specifically on SIECs.

Due to COVID-19, fieldwork was carried out remotely. Scheduling remote substantive discussions with interlocutors proved more complicated than conducting such an exercise in person. Differences in time zones limited the hours per day for scheduling interviews, and a higher-than-usual number of interviews had to be rescheduled because key informants were unavailable at agreed times. The quality of interviews also suffered, as remote interviews have several drawbacks. Typically, fewer questions can be asked (including follow-up ones on interesting lines of inquiry and responses), and the interviewer is unable to assess body language and visual cues. Poor telecommunications infrastructure also affected several interviews.

Several key elections took place during the initial fieldwork period, which complicated scheduling with interlocutors, particularly from INEC. These included off-cycle elections in Edo and Ondo States in September and October, respectively. INEC also scheduled several by-elections in different states in November.⁵ As a result, the AT extended the timeframe for interviews.

⁵ Many of these by-elections were later moved to December due to the worsening security situation in the country surrounding police brutality and the #EndSARS campaign.

Obtaining permission for interviews with key INEC and Nigerian security sector interlocutors also proved challenging despite formal requests through both USAID and Cloudburst on behalf of the AT. INEC eventually designated interview subjects, and interviews took place, at times with the assistance of USAID. The #EndSARS movement and deteriorating security situation in Abuja also complicated requests for interviews with police and other security agencies.⁶

Finally, while every effort was made to recruit women for the NES, women make up just 10 (20 percent) of the NES sample. This is unfortunate, but understandable given the predominance of men in Nigeria's electoral sector. The survey was sent out to 145 experts, of whom only 21 (14.5 percent) were female. The survey analysis plan does not call for disaggregation of the results by gender. Nevertheless, this low level of representation constitutes a limitation in the NES data.

Female participation was higher in the state-level survey, with 188 (30 percent) of the 625 respondents being female. This matches the number of female respondents who were sent a survey: 308 (30 percent) of the 1012 surveys. Female participation was highest in Kaduna, where 50 percent (9) were female, and lowest in Sokoto, where only 7 percent (1 respondent) was female.

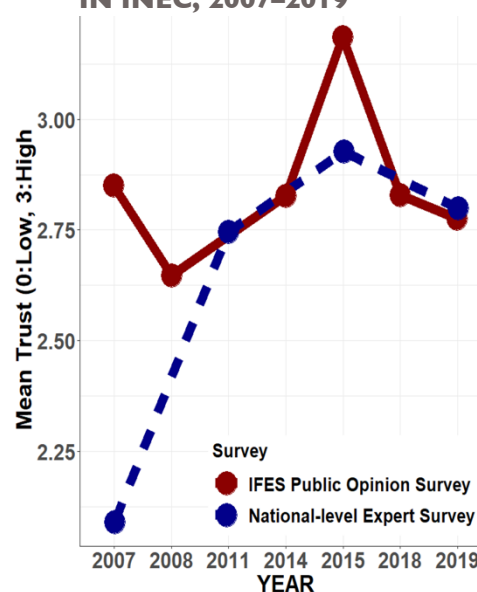
3.0 CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS (RQ1)

1.A LEVEL OF TRUST IN INEC AND SIECS SINCE THE 2007 ELECTIONS

IFES public opinion surveys asked respondents “How much confidence do you have in the ability of INEC to organize credible elections?”⁷ As shown in Figure 1, mean popular trust decreased in the aftermath of the 2007 elections from 2.85 to 2.65. It returned to close to pre-2007 levels (2.83) in 2014. In the months immediately following the 2015 elections, INEC recorded its highest level of public support (3.19). However, between 2015 and 2018, INEC trust fell back to 2.83. Thereafter, trust in INEC further decreased (albeit much less steeply) between 2018 and 2019. Figure 1 also reveals that national experts' recall of their mean trust in INEC's performance, shown through the NES, increased from 2.09 in 2007 to 2.74 in 2011 and 2.92 in 2015, then back down to 2.8 in 2019.⁸

The NES and IFES public opinion data thus reveal two main trends in the trustworthiness of INEC since 2007. First, for the general public, there was an increase in confidence in INEC between the 2007 and 2015 elections, after which trust in INEC declined. Among national experts, however, trust increased regarding the 2011 elections compared to 2007 and then remained relatively steady regarding elections from 2011 to 2019. The views of key informants (stakeholders)

FIGURE 1: LEVEL OF TRUST IN INEC, 2007–2019



⁶ The #EndSARS protests take their name from a 2017 Twitter campaign using the hashtag #ENDSARS to demand the disbanding of the eponymous police unit by the Nigerian government. The movement gained momentum in October 2020 following more revelations of abuses committed by the unit. Mass demonstrations took place throughout major cities in Nigeria.

⁷ IFES fielded six surveys (pre-2007, post-2007, 2014, 2015, 2018, 2019). Possible responses to this question included “No confidence,” “Very little,” “Fair amount,” and “Great deal,” which were coded on a scale of one to four respectively.

⁸ Although mean trust in INEC fluctuates between 2.74 and 2.92 in this period, these changes in trust fall within the 90 percent confidence interval, which means that experts' trust in INEC across these three elections is statistically indistinguishable. The NES asked respondents “How much did you trust the INEC chairperson and commissioners to do what was in the best interest of the country during the [year] general elections?” Possible responses included “Not at all,” “Just a little,” “Somewhat,” and “A lot,” which were coded on a scale of one to four respectively.

interviewed, who universally perceived substantial overall increases in trust in INEC since 2007, more closely mirrored the trends in trust among national experts than the public.⁹

Stakeholders credited the upward trend in trust in INEC to several factors. These included the increased independence of INEC resulting from legal and administrative reforms that were implemented beginning in 2010. In particular, this involved its budget autonomy and changes in the rules for appointment of Commissioners, and perceived improvements in neutrality and impartiality of election staff, including the appointment of some INEC Commissioners and Resident Electoral Commissioners¹⁰ (RECs) from civil society, and new practices in the selection and appointment of ad hoc staff (see also Sections 1.C and 2.A).¹¹ At the same time, the appointment process for Commissioners, in particular the paramount role of the president, detracted from INEC's credibility.

Stakeholders also pointed to the willingness of INEC to reform its processes and better organize its work, including a greater commitment to transparency and inclusivity in its management of elections. The willingness and ability of INEC to communicate with electoral stakeholders were widely believed to correlate with those stakeholders' trust in the institution.¹²

In addition, interlocutors confirmed a finding of the expert survey on the important role that the leadership of INEC played in trust in the organization, widely crediting Professor Attahiru Jega's appointment and performance as chairman from 2010 to 2015 as increasing trust and confidence in INEC.¹³

TABLE 1: TRUST IN INEC BY STATE: HIGH, MEDIAN, AND LOW

STATE	TRUST
Sokoto State	3.00
Borno State	2.91
Lagos State	2.90
Delta State	2.38
Jigawa State	2.35
Kebbi State	2.33
Ondo State	2.29
Niger State	2.27
Zamfara State	1.69
Adamawa State	1.56
Kogi State	1.53

⁹ Stakeholders tended to focus on the period in aggregate and did not specify changes over each of these election years. They also took into consideration off-cycle elections in 2019 and 2020, which were not included in the surveys.

¹⁰ An REC is the person vested with INEC authority at the state level. There are 37 RECs.

¹¹ The willingness of INEC to remove personnel involved in fraudulent behavior and convictions of INEC staff for electoral impropriety were also thought to improve credibility in the institution.

¹² As an example, the loss of trust in INEC following the 2019 elections was explained by several experts as having less to do with their perceptions of INEC's ability to administer elections, and more with INEC's unwillingness to be open and transparent about the status of electoral preparations and other issues.

¹³ Stakeholders varied in their assessment of INEC under Chairman Mahmood Yakubu. Some felt the reputation of and trust in INEC is lower since the departure of Jega, while others felt that trust has continued to grow. Per the NES, mean trust declined only slightly from 2.92 in 2015 to 2.8 in 2019.

In interviews, stakeholders did not express high levels of trust in SIECs. Nor was it possible for them to distinguish changes over time, a process made more difficult by the irregular schedule of elections conducted by these bodies. A common perception was that SIECs were an extension of the governor's administration and lacked any independence or autonomy (see also Section 1.C). Selected results from the SES in Table 1, which shows the states with the highest, median, and lowest values, indicate that levels of trust in SIECs were substantially lower than that of INEC. Across the 36 states, the mean trust in SIECs was 2.21, substantially lower than trust in INEC (2.86).¹⁴ Moreover, trust levels varied widely across the 36 states. Experts associated the highest levels of trust in SIECs in Sokoto, Borno, and Lagos and the lowest levels in Zamfara, Adamawa, and Kogi States.

I.B LEVEL OF TRUST IN THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS SINCE THE 2007 ELECTIONS

Perceptions of the credibility of elections in Nigeria since 2007 have tracked closely with levels of trust in INEC. Among the public and national experts, the credibility of Nigeria's federal and state elections increased between 2007 and 2015. However, following the 2015 elections, the perceived credibility of federal and state elections declined, though not to the levels experienced in 2007. Although there is no data over time on the credibility of local council elections supervised by SIECs, data from the SES across the 36 states indicate that most recent local government elections fell below generally accepted levels of election credibility.

As shown in Figure 2, public perceptions of the fairness of elections decreased in the aftermath of the 2007 elections from 2.86 to 2.45.¹⁵ Levels rose considerably in 2014 and again after the 2015 elections, when Nigerian citizens expressed their highest level of support for the credibility of elections (3.45). Between 2015 and 2018 election credibility fell slightly (3.29), but declined more significantly after the 2019 elections (2.90).

FIGURE 2: PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTION CREDIBILITY, 2007–2019

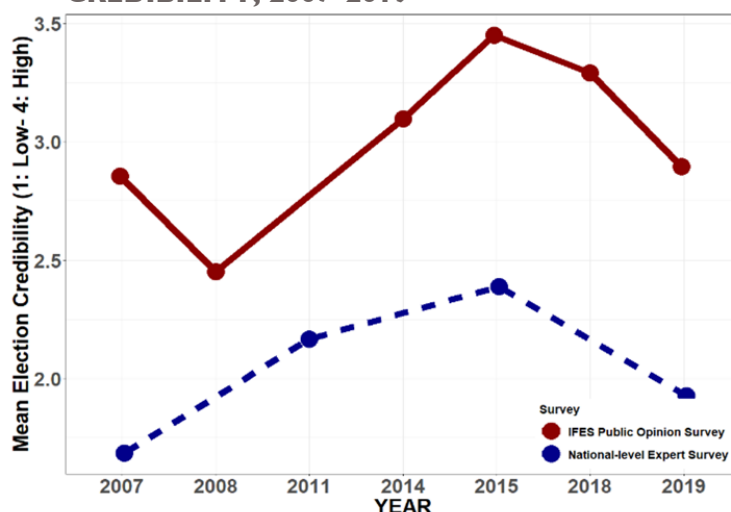


Figure 2 also shows that among national-level experts surveyed in 2020, mean recall perceptions of election credibility increased from 1.68 in 2007, to 2.16 in 2011, and 2.38 in 2015. Regarding the 2019 elections, perceptions of election credibility fell to 1.92, above 2007 levels but significantly below the 2015 peak.¹⁶ EPD data, shown in Figure 3 below, tells a similar story.

¹⁴ The SES asked a similar question about trust in INEC and the RECs associated with the 2019 elections across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Mean trust was 2.86, with highest trust associated with Ogun (3.62) and lowest with Abia (2.08).

¹⁵ IFES asked respondents "How free and fair do you expect/were the upcoming/most recent elections?" Possible responses included "Not at all free and fair," "Not too free and fair," "Somewhat free and fair," and "Completely free and fair," which were coded on a scale of one to four respectively.

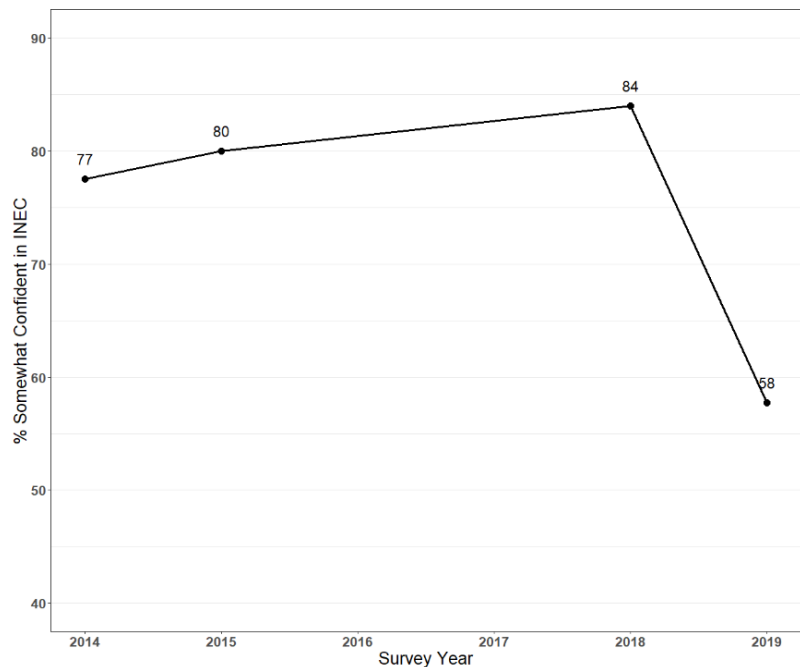
¹⁶ The NES asked respondents "Taking into account the pre-election, election, and post-election processes, how would you rate the [year] general elections in terms of being free and fair?" The question was asked across the four elections (2007, 2011, 2015, 2019). Possible responses included "Not free and fair," "Free and fair, with major problems," "Free and fair, with minor problems," and "Completely free and fair," which were coded on a scale of one to four respectively.

Stakeholders interviewed believed that elections were increasingly credible in Nigeria, but that election credibility could be diminished by factors including how candidates were selected by parties, poor operations and logistics, a lack of security, and how court decisions affected election outcomes. In contrast to the fluctuations in perceptions of overall election credibility, respondents felt that INEC's ability to administer elections continued to increase with each election.¹⁷ There was also consensus that, over time, INEC's results were more reflective of voters' choices as measured by Parallel Vote Tabulations (PVTs) conducted by CSOs.¹⁸

Stakeholder responses also demonstrated the importance of contextualizing these perceptions within their specific time period. For example, the low bar set in 2007, and the positive feelings among stakeholders resulting from the commitment to reform and the eventual 2010 Electoral Act, may have contributed to many election watchers overplaying the improvements of 2011. Likewise, narratives in 2015 were influenced not only by improved electoral administration, but also by the peaceful transfer of power and the decrease in post-election violence after 2011.

EPD data from before and after the 2015 and 2019 elections further triangulate these findings, and provide useful data on expectations prior to the election with the perception after the election. Table 2 below, shows that, prior to the 2015 elections, 77.5% of voters believed the election would be free and fair, a number which increased to 80% in the aftermath of the election.¹⁹ An even higher percentage (84%) believed elections were free and fair going into the 2019 election, but this number plummeted to just 57.7%, below even 2015 expectations, after the election took place. Factors that may predict perceptions of free and fair elections did not fall to the same degree between 2015 and 2019. In fact, the percentage of respondents concerned with violence and who reported vote-buying behaviors decreased between 2015 and 2019.

FIGURE 3. EPD TRENDS IN PERCEPTION OF ELECTION CREDIBILITY



¹⁷ The 2019 elections were deemed to expose flaws in INEC's preparations, and to be problematic in the failure of the leadership to recognize problems and to acknowledge them publicly. However, there was the view that election processes like registration, accreditation, and performance of ad hoc staff on election day were improving.

¹⁸ CSOs have carried out sample-based PVTs for presidential and other elections in Nigeria since 2011 that have been consistent with official results released by INEC. Please see this [brief overview of PVT methodology](#) for more information.

¹⁹ Table shows proportion of respondents who rate previous and upcoming election as 1) completely free and fair/free and fair with minor problems; 2) consider the elections free of violence 3) are very/somewhat concerned about election violence; 4) very often/sometimes/rarely experience election-related violence in the past 12 months; 5) report accepting money in exchange for one's vote; and, 6) report neighbors accepting money in exchange for one's vote.

TABLE 2. EPD DATA PERCEPTIONS OF CREDIBILITY

	PRE-2015	POST- 2015	PRE-2019	POST-2019	POOLED SAMPLE
Free And Fair	77.5%	80%	84%	57.7%	74.3%
Elections Free Of Violence		81.4%		59%	70%
Concerned With Violence		55.3%		53.6%	54.5%
Experience Personal Violence		21.5%		27.6%	24.6%
Personally Accept Gift		26.6%		21.8%	24.1%
Neighbors Accept Gift		54.4		49.3%	51.6%
Observations	2529	2616	2544	2121	

The SES asked similar questions about the credibility of the federal and state elections in 2019²⁰, as well as the most recent local council elections.²¹ Across Nigeria’s 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the mean election credibility rating of the 2019 federal and state elections was 2.43. Experts in states such as Ogun, Ondo, and Lagos reported the highest levels of perceived fairness in their respective federal and state elections, at levels above 2.95, while Kogi (1.33), Kano (1.82), and Abia (1.85) states registered the lowest levels of perceived fairness. These findings triangulate across the public opinion data. Variations in perceived trust and fairness are closely linked to the political economy of individual states. The low scores in Kogi and Abia, for example, where local elections had high levels of violence, intimidation, and manipulation, were likely driven by internal conflicts between state governors and other dominant political figures allied to rivaling parties.

The most recent local elections held across the 36 states reported much lower perceptions of election credibility, with a mean of 1.79, which is almost half the mean credibility rating of the federal and state elections. There was significant variation, however, across states. For example, election credibility was ranked lowest in Bayelsa (1.13), Plateau (1.18), and Kwara (1.22) and highest in Taraba (2.55), Lagos (2.56), and the FCT (2.6). Stakeholders interviewed did not address specific local elections but believed the credibility of local elections was much lower than federal and state elections. This was due to several factors, including INEC’s lack of involvement, the absence of an established timetable for holding elections, and few budget or job guarantees.

I.C SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF INEC AND SIEC WORK THAT ELICIT SATISFACTION OR DISSATISFACTION

The AT used two approaches to assess INEC and SIEC work performance: 1) perceptions of INEC and SIEC *independence*, *professionalism*, and *transparency*—three recognized principles of election management—and 2) levels of satisfaction across six indicators associated with INEC’s management of electoral operations during the 2019 elections. Data from the IFES public opinion survey and NES revealed

²⁰ The SES asked respondents “Taking into account the pre-election, election, and post-election processes, how would you rate the [year] general elections in [state/FCT] terms of being free and fair?” The question was asked across the two elections (2015 and 2019). Possible responses included “Not free and fair,” “Free and fair, with major problems,” “Free and fair, with minor problems,” and “Completely free and fair,” which were coded on a scale of one to four respectively.

²¹ The SES asked respondents “Taking into account the pre-election, election, and post-election processes, how would you rate the [state] [year] local government council elections in terms of being free and fair?” The question was asked with reference to the most recent local government elections conducted in each of the 36 states. Possible responses included “Not free and fair,” “Free and fair, with major problems,” “Free and fair, with minor problems,” and “Completely free and fair,” which were coded on a scale of one to four respectively.

important trends in perceptions of INEC independence, professionalism, and transparency between 2007 and 2019 (see Figures 4 and 5).²²

Among the public, evaluations of these principles followed a now-familiar pattern: increasing from 2007 to a peak in 2015, before falling close to the pre-2007 level following the 2019 elections. INEC's professionalism was often ranked highest while its independence was often ranked lowest. National experts' recalled evaluations of independence, professionalism, and transparency all increased regarding the 2011 elections compared to 2007. While their recalled perceptions of INEC's professionalism and transparency remained relatively unchanged for the 2015 and 2019 elections, their recalled evaluation of independence increased to its highest level regarding the 2015 elections and fell regarding the 2019 elections. State experts were asked similar questions about principles of election management associated with INEC and SIECs in 2019. Across all three metrics, INEC outperformed SIECs. As with national-level experts, professionalism received the highest rankings across both SIECs and INEC.

FIGURE 4: PERCEPTIONS OF INEC'S INDEPENDENCE, PROFESSIONALISM, AND TRANSPARENCY, 2007–2019

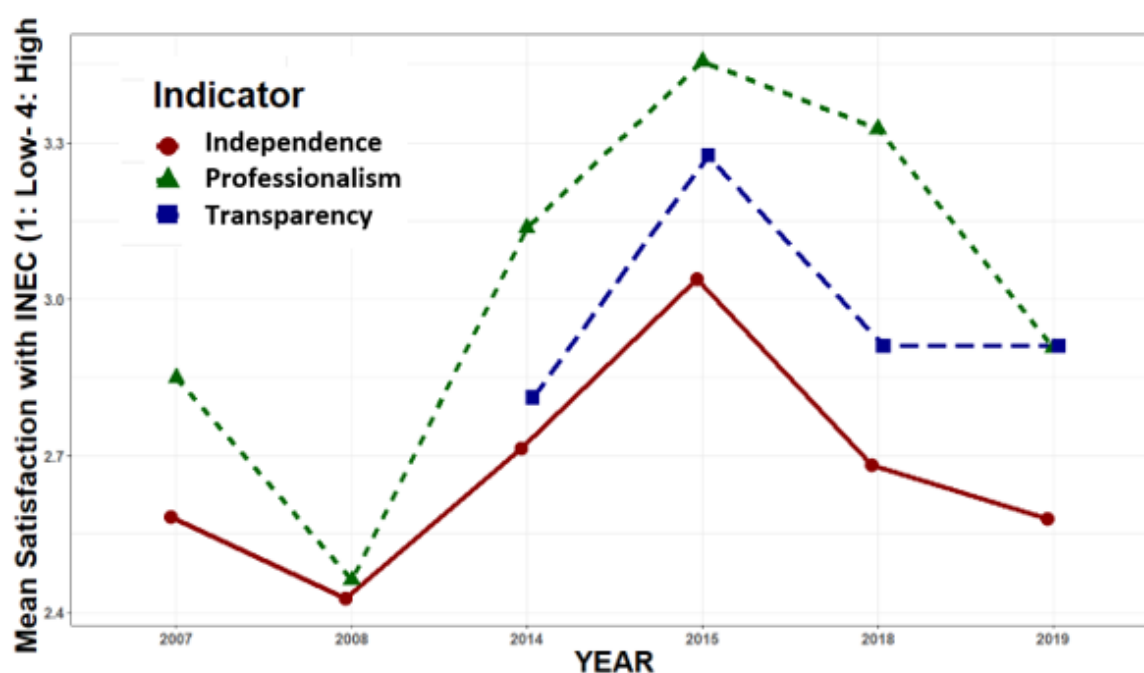
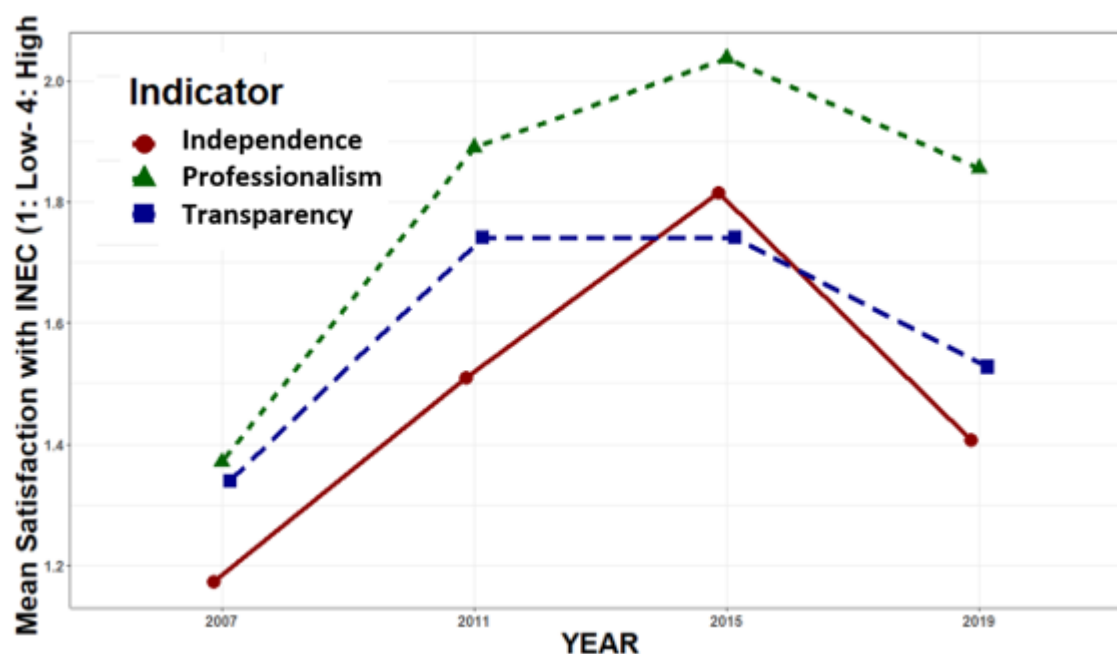


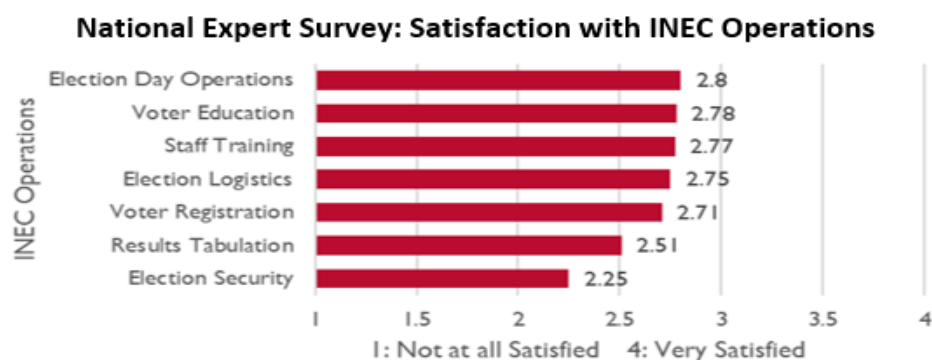
FIGURE 5: NATIONAL EXPERT SURVEY, PERCEPTIONS OF INEC'S INDEPENDENCE, PROFESSIONALISM, AND TRANSPARENCY, 2007–2019

²² IFES public opinion surveys asked respondents how much they agreed that INEC 1) was an independent institution that is not influenced by political considerations, 2) was transparent and informed the public and the media about its activities, and 3) was professional in organizing the 2019 elections. Responses were "Strongly Disagree," "Somewhat Disagree," "Somewhat Agree," and "Strongly Agree," coded on a scale of one to four respectively. The NES asked respondents about their level of agreement with INEC's independence when making decisions, transparency in communicating decisions, and competency organizing elections. The four main response options to these questions, "Strongly Disagree," "Somewhat Disagree," "Somewhat Agree," and "Strongly Agree," were coded on a scale of one to four respectively.

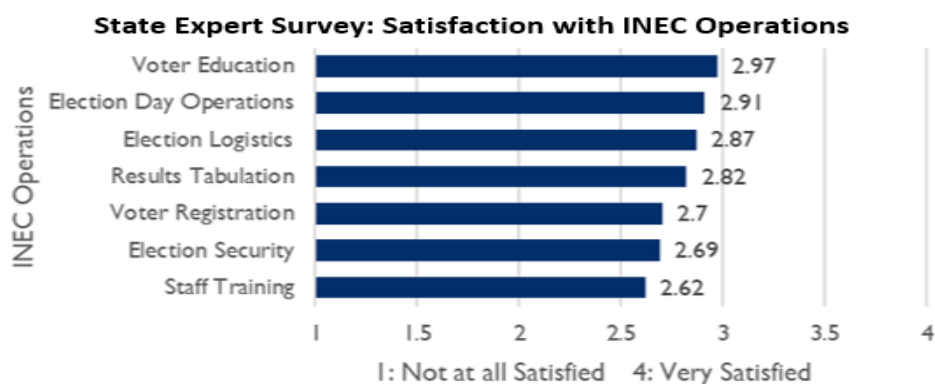


Both surveys also measured indicators associated with six aspects of INEC’s electoral management during the 2019 elections.²³ As indicated in Figure 6, national and state experts were most satisfied with voter education, election day operations, results tabulation, and election logistics, and least satisfied with election security, voter registration, and the recruitment and training of staff.

FIGURE 6: ELECTION EXPERTS’ RECALL IN 2020 OF PERCEPTIONS OF SATISFACTION WITH INEC’S OPERATIONS, 2007–2019 ELECTIONS



²³ These indicators were: voter education, voter registration, training and recruitment of election staff, election logistics, election security, election day operations (voting operations), and results tabulation.



Key informant interview responses related to independence, professionalism, and transparency largely reflected trends in the public opinion and expert surveys.

As discussed in Section I.A, INEC and SIEC autonomy and independence in administering elections were strongly associated with the credibility of elections.

Stakeholders also associated greater credibility of elections with INEC's increased professionalism and competencies, especially regarding planning; election day staffing; and mastery of logistics, equipment, and personnel deployment.²⁴ There was more dissatisfaction among stakeholders with INEC's results tabulation and collation processes, and a few respondents raised the issue of INEC's ability to consistently execute planning.²⁵ The introduction of new technologies (regardless of the degree of success in implementation) was also closely associated with increased credibility and trust in electoral processes.²⁶

Transparency and the willingness to share information on elections were singled out as major factors in determining trust in and the credibility of the electoral process in Nigeria. Overall, respondents felt that INEC has communicated better on electoral timelines, key events, challenges, and results since 2007. Likewise, where INEC has shown an unwillingness or inability to communicate with the public, civil society, political parties, and others, it has harmed election credibility.²⁷

To the extent that INEC has been able to introduce transparency into its operations and practices, credibility in elections has also increased. Stakeholders widely felt that INEC was sharing more data and information, particularly on the preparation of elections and (disaggregated) voter data, resulting in improved credibility. The accessibility of information by civil society, either directly or through INEC websites and social media, has also improved greatly since 2007. The recent release of preliminary results data from polling stations has also contributed to transparency. At the same time, informants noted that INEC does not share information on every aspect of its work, including electoral preparations and procurements of election materials.

Meanwhile, SIECs were largely viewed as a "black box" in their communication with stakeholders on decision-making processes, preparation of elections, and electoral operations. Interlocutors also could not point to examples of fruitful cooperation between SIECs and civil society.

²⁴ Stakeholders acknowledged that some of these tasks remain a challenge for INEC. But a commonly held belief (in the words of one interlocutor) was that "once INEC deploys equipment and personnel to the field, they know how to get the job done."

²⁵ Multiple election observer reports from 2015–2019 have also consistently pointed to problems in results collation as a chief vulnerability to election credibility in Nigeria.

²⁶ A good example of this was the introduction of the biometric SCRs in the 2015 general elections: the technology was neither fully deployed nor fully functioning on election day, but the perception of its ability to reduce fraud contributed to Nigerians' increased confidence in their elections.

²⁷ An example of this relationship was the loss in credibility suffered by postponing elections in 2019, which was greater than the credibility losses in 2015 or 2011 (also delayed elections). While not the only factor, the common view was that INEC's unwillingness to share information on the status of the election until the last minute hurt INEC's credibility as much as (if not more than) the reasons for the delay.

4.0 CHANGES IN ELECTORAL INTEGRITY (RQ2)

2.A OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS IMPACTING STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

Stakeholders pointed to several key practices introduced by INEC that have impacted the credibility of elections in Nigeria. Chief among these were the introduction of *continuous voter registration (CVR)*, accreditation of voters through the *PVCs and biometric smart card readers (SCRs)*, use of *electoral planning and tracking tools*, and *immediate publication of polling station results*. Stakeholders believed INEC's current practices for *collation and tabulation of results* were more problematic and undermined trust and credibility. Informants broadly criticized local council elections organized by SIECs as not being “free or fair” due to the election laws and lack of independence of the commissions rather than focus on any specific election process as particularly weak or strong. According to the SES, experts were most satisfied with the professionalism and transparency of SIEC commissioners and senior staff, and least satisfied with their independence from the state government (see also Section I.C).

Introduction of CVR. Elections through 2007 were implemented without a permanent voter register. Rather, for each election, INEC identified eligible voters, after which records were neither retained nor updated. Stakeholders considered this method inefficient and too decentralized. Political parties would also subvert the process by selectively registering supporters, many of whom might not be eligible to vote. In 2010, however, INEC initiated a permanent national voter registration process using direct data capture machines that took biometrics of voters and kept records current through regular registration of new voters and updates to existing records. This was the beginning of the current CVR system in Nigeria that now serves as a permanently maintained database of voters in the country.²⁸ CVR was widely recognized to increase the integrity of Nigeria's elections.²⁹ However, stakeholders both inside and outside INEC acknowledged that voter registration issues persist in Nigeria, including the continued inclusion of data of persons who are not eligible to vote or who are deceased.

Use of the PVC and biometric SCR. The practice and technology deemed to contribute the most to the credibility of elections was the validation of the PVC and the prospective voter through the biometric SCR. Following pilots in Ekiti and Osun off-cycle elections, SCRs were first deployed nationally for the 2015 general elections. Stakeholders widely concluded that the introduction of this practice improved the electoral process by eliminating instances of multiple voting and proxy voting.³⁰ In subsequent by-elections, the use of PVCs improved, and the technology was more consistently applied in the 2019 elections. Interlocutors stressed the importance of consolidating this practice through further amendments to the legal framework.³¹

Tabulation and collation of voting results. The use of PVCs and SCRs was largely believed to reduce irregularities in the voting process in 2015 and 2019. However, they have done little to address stakeholders' concerns about results collation and tabulation, which are viewed as overly complicated and formalistic with too many layers and too little transparency as well as too few checks and controls in the

²⁸ The CVR process was completed after the 2011 general elections and in place for off-cycle elections in Kogi, Bayelsa, Cross River, Adamawa, Kebbi, Sokoto, Edo, Ondo, Ekiti, and Osun States and the 2015 general elections.

²⁹ NES indicates that 64 percent of respondents were very/fairly satisfied with the CVR in 2019, and 62 percent indicated that their satisfaction with the CVR increased a lot/somewhat.

³⁰ In 2015, there were uneven application of the card readers around the country and some delays in voting and excessive wait times—sources of frustration for voters. Nevertheless, perception of their value was quite positive. The IFES 2015 post-election survey asked respondents direct questions about the impact of SCRs and PVCs on the integrity of the elections. Approximately three fourths of the respondents believed that the SCRs (78 percent) and PVCs (76 percent) helped to improve electoral integrity.

³¹ Due to the absence of mention of the use of technologies in the Electoral Act, courts have refused to rule that elections conducted without the SCRs are invalid.

process.³² As referenced in Section I.C, these issues continue to undermine the credibility of Nigeria's elections and require reform.

Immediate online publication of polling station results. In 2020, INEC introduced online results posting during the Nasarawa Central Constituency elections through the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IREV), a dedicated public portal that enables voters to view polling unit results in real-time as the voting ends on election day.³³ This practice was repeated recently in the Edo and Ondo State elections and was lauded by election observers and key informants—including political parties, civil society, and the international community—as building confidence in results and also INEC itself.³⁴ While not directly addressing the process of collation and tabulation at higher levels, releasing data on polling unit vote counts made it easier to independently verify aggregated results. Stakeholders felt the practice would become a hallmark of future elections and underscored the importance of amending the electoral legal framework to guarantee its adoption.

Improved management through tracking tools and methodologies. Stakeholders acknowledged that INEC has greatly improved its ability to plan, carry out, and monitor election operations and logistics in recent elections through the adoption and use of several tracking tools. These include the Election Project Plan (EPP) and Election Management System (EMS), which helped plan and monitor election preparations. During by-elections in 2013 and 2014, INEC also began using Electoral Operations Support Centers (EOSCs) to further its ability to track operations at the local and regional levels. By the 2015 general elections, the EOSC was fully developed and reportedly was the tool informing INEC that materials were not in place, contributing to their recognition that a delay was needed.³⁵ After the 2015 elections, INEC introduced Election Management Support Centers (EMSCs)³⁶ in each state, with dedicated staff to operate the multiple INEC tracking and monitoring tools. INEC also credits these methodologies and tools with improving the ability to plan and monitor operations.³⁷

Ability to carry out voter education programs. Stakeholders were mixed in their assessment of INEC's voter education efforts and capacities. A common perception was that INEC can successfully design and deliver voter education programs on a massive scale.³⁸ Both the NES and SES assessed satisfaction with INEC's voter education activities, with 69 percent (NES) and 72 percent (SES) of respondents satisfied with INEC's attempts at increasing voter awareness during the most recent general elections. As a follow-up question, NES respondents were asked to express their view as to whether the effectiveness of INEC's voter education initiatives increased, decreased, or remained the same since 2015, with 50 percent of respondents reporting an increase.

Where stakeholders believed INEC could improve was in its ability to develop more targeted, sophisticated campaigns and messages that would appeal to key demographic groups and address some of the underlying needs in electoral information. They acknowledged that political parties, the NOA, and CSOs also have responsibilities in educating and informing voters.

³² In Nigeria, results are tabulated first at the polling station level (from the various polling streams), then the ward level, the local government level, the state level, and finally at the national tally center (depending on the election).

³³ INEC experimented with technologies in pushing out data from polling stations at least as far back as the 2015 general elections. The practice was set aside to prioritize rollout of PVCs and SCRs in time for those elections. INEC then developed and piloted a system for transmitting polling station results as a means for auditing their own work, beginning with off-cycle elections in Kogi State. Pursuing electronic results transmission has also been hampered by INEC's (and others') belief that the process requires a stronger legal basis.

³⁴ Eighty-three percent of NES respondents consider the uploading of polling results through IREV as an effective reform to the process of counting and tabulating votes.

³⁵ Security threats were given as the official reason at the time behind the need for the delay. According to stakeholders, these tools also provided key, early information to INEC that it was not ready in 2019, but INEC did not act on this information until the day before the elections.

³⁶ In some documents, EMSCs are referred to as election monitoring and support centers.

³⁷ When asked to evaluate the EMSCs and EOSCs, 65 percent and 56 percent of NES respondents, respectively, rated these initiatives as being very/fairly effective.

³⁸ Interlocutors noted significant contributions made by INEC in the past two general elections in informing and educating voters.

Ability to identify and train ad hoc staff. Stakeholders viewed INEC’s ability to recruit ad hoc staff as positive and improving.³⁹ The use of polling staff from the NYSC was consistently deemed one of the more positive recent changes to electoral practices. Stakeholders believed polling staff recruited from the NYSC were “less corruptible” than those drawn from the civil service ranks or openly recruited. They also believed the use of returning officers from academia was a positive practice. These opinions were also reflected in the expert surveys (see Section 2.B).

Stakeholders rated the training of ad hoc staff positively, with the exception of training on collation and tabulation, where the process “fell down.” Both the NES and SES asked respondents about their levels of satisfaction with the recruitment and training of ad hoc staff in 2019. Experts were slightly more satisfied with INEC’s training of ad hoc staff relative to the recruitment of staff.⁴⁰ The establishment of TEI is believed to have increased the quality of trainings and played a significant role in INEC’s ability to deliver quality trainings and materials for recent elections. Over 78 percent of NES respondents were very or fairly satisfied with TEI’s training programs and materials.⁴¹ INEC also believes that the training quality has increased with each successive election.

Inclusion of vulnerable groups. Stakeholders noted increased effort by INEC to include women, youth, and PWDs in the electoral process. The current Commission’s efforts to promote the participation of PWDs was noted in particular, including: INEC’s identification of these voters through voter registration data; publishing voter education materials in braille, Easy Read, and other accessible formats; and introducing tactile ballot guides and other assistive instruments. However, as shown in Table 3, responses to the NES and SES indicated low levels of satisfaction among experts of INEC’s efforts to accommodate PWDs, which is perhaps indicative of recognition of the gravity of the conditions for these voters and the scale of the problems. Informants also positively assessed INEC’s voter education campaigns aimed at women and youth voters.

TABLE 3: LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PWDs

	NES	SES
	Very/Fairly Satisfied	Very/Fairly Satisfied
Voter registration process (INEC made adequate accommodations for PWDs)	42%	39%
Adequacy of voting accommodations for PWDs (e.g., tactile ballots and braille guides)	42%	35%
Treatment of PWDs by INEC officials at polling units in the 2019 general elections	58%	53%

Online accreditation and registration. Due in part to public health concerns and restrictive measures related to COVID-19, INEC recently introduced online accreditation of observers. INEC and CSOs both assessed this innovation positively, and it is anticipated that this practice will continue in future elections.

³⁹ The following were judged on a scale of one to four: for training, the NES mean was 2.80 and the SES mean was 2.72; for recruitment, the NES mean was 2.65 and the SES mean was 2.58.

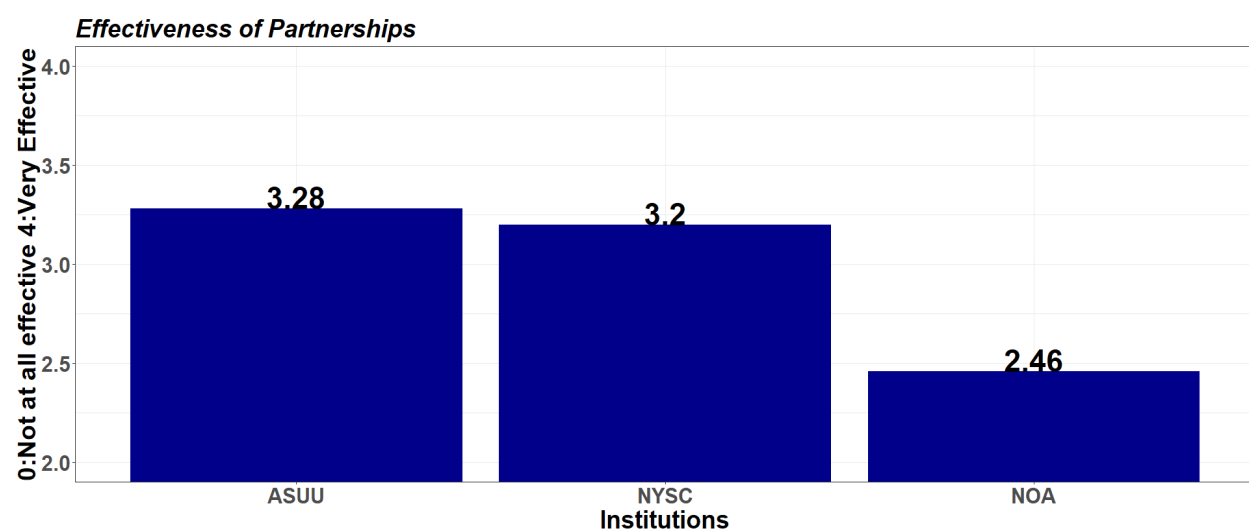
⁴⁰ This contrasted somewhat with election observer reports which have often pointed out deficiencies in the training of these staff.

⁴¹ The NES asked “How effective do you consider The Electoral Institute’s (TEI) training of INEC staff and development of training materials for ad hoc staff?”

2.B MANAGEMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS ESSENTIAL TO ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Every election authority finds that it alone cannot address all aspects of election management and operations. Rather, it must rely on multiple partner entities, such as state institutions, vendors, and civic organizations (among others) to fulfill certain tasks. In Nigeria, INEC and SIECs rely heavily on partnerships with logistics and security institutions and other agencies. The NES asked respondents to assess the effectiveness of these relationships. Experts believed relationships with these other institutions were effective with the exception of the NOA, with relationships with NYSC and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) ranked highest. These findings correlated with key informant perceptions.

FIGURE 7: EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTNERSHIPS



Election security. Stakeholders interviewed were complimentary of the work INEC does to manage the delicate relationships it must maintain to provide for electoral security. INEC co-chairs the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Electoral Security (ICCES), an important apparatus that coordinates activities of different stakeholders, including the election administration, police, paramilitary agencies, and others in creating a safe and secure election environment. INEC commences security planning several months prior to an election and has dedicated points of contact within each of the partner institutions. INEC brings to the ICCES assessments of its needs and makes specific requests, utilizing its own tools and methodologies to identify hotspots and specific risks. ICCES meetings to review and address security risks take place on a regular basis in both Abuja and at the state and local levels.⁴²

From the perspective of INEC and others, management of election security in Nigeria has improved following the establishment of ICCES in 2011.⁴³ Previously, security followed a “one size fits all” approach irrespective of the challenges and needs. Now, police are seen as more capable of providing the correct number of security staff. There is also coordination with the Nigerian military forces, in order to plan responses where police might be overwhelmed. Planning and use of threat analytics have helped determine specific responses for each election event.

These positive assessments aside, the electoral security framework falls short of guaranteeing citizens safe and secure elections. According to the NES, only 40 percent of those surveyed were either very or fairly

⁴² SIECs were also asked questions about security for local elections. While information sharing, working groups, and similar practices take place, interlocutors described a more “passive” approach, with security simply being in the hands of the governor and police.

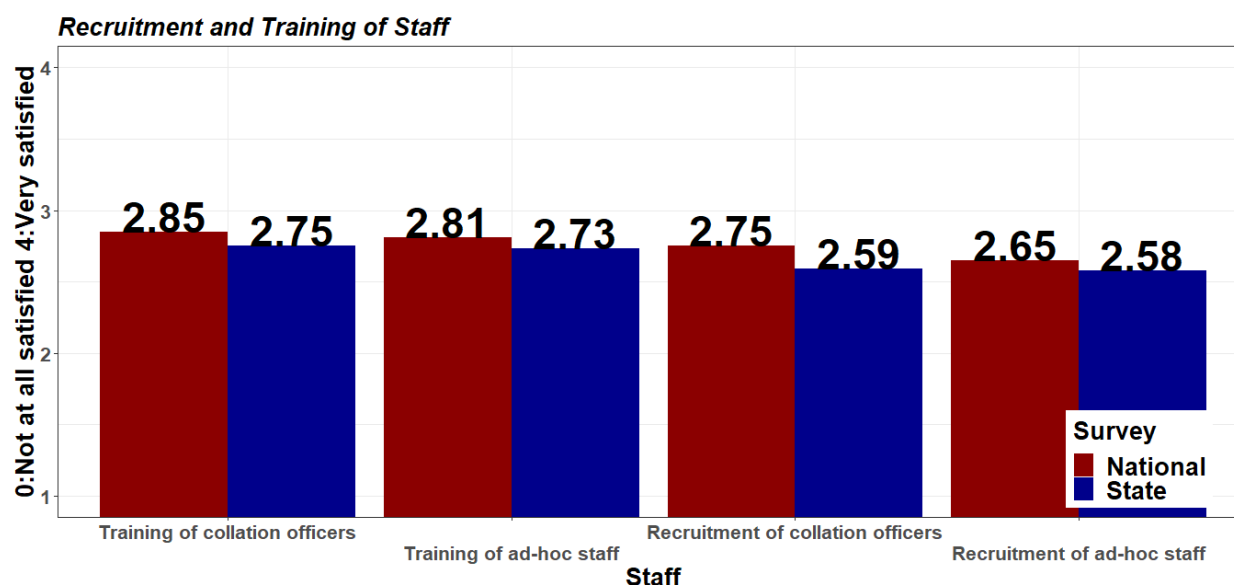
⁴³ At the same time, the NES revealed a drop in satisfaction with INEC’s coordination of security agencies from 2015 to 2019 among respondents, who were asked whether INEC’s coordination of security agencies increased, decreased, or remained the same between 2015 and 2019 general elections. A majority of experts (58 percent) reported that INEC’s performance remained the same or decreased between 2015 and 2019.

satisfied with INEC’s coordination of security agencies during the 2019 elections. Moreover, satisfaction with the performance of several security actors was mixed, with relatively high levels of satisfaction among state-level experts, lower levels among national-level experts, and low levels expressed in key informant interviews (see Figure 8). Stakeholders pointed out that even in instances where INEC and SIECs plan ahead, convene the security actors, and direct their activities up to a point, they cannot ultimately compel the security forces to act even though the law may suggest INEC has such a role.⁴⁴ They also cited security agencies’ loyalty to the executive and, thus, their interest in the outcome of the election, as a potentially compromising factor.⁴⁵

Ad hoc staffing. One of the most important and productive relationships INEC maintains is with the NYSC, which mobilizes Nigerian youth under the age of 30 for a year of national service. Corps members are selected, trained, and assigned to serve as ad hoc election staff through a Memorandum of Understanding between INEC and NYSC.⁴⁶ Consistent with NES findings, stakeholders believed that the partnership works well, which was echoed by INEC and NYSC interlocutors.⁴⁷ However, this cooperation has been limited where NYSC will not deploy corps members for safety reasons. This forces INEC to look for other staffing solutions and partnerships—such as with local schools and universities.

Stakeholders were also largely supportive of the use of ASUU as returning officers and collation officers, although a few interlocutors, including INEC officials, expressed concerns about their impartiality on occasion. In addition to the responses presented in Figure 8 and Table 4, experts were very or fairly satisfied with the recruitment and training of collation and returning officers (both at 65 percent), while 40 percent of respondents felt manipulation of collation processes by officers was widespread.

FIGURE 8: SATISFACTION WITH RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF



⁴⁴ The Electoral Act in several places references the role of police officers in assisting election officials to maintain security and order on election day; for example, Sections 59.1, 61.3, 94.1-3, and others.

⁴⁵ A recurring comment from stakeholders was that the September 2020 election in Edo was exemplary, including from a security standpoint, but this was due in part to the president’s disinterest in the outcome.

⁴⁶ Prior to this arrangement, INEC relied mostly on recruitment of ad hoc staff from local communities, including teachers, civil service employees, etc. However, this practice often led to partisanship within the election staff, and staff over whom INEC felt it had little control.

⁴⁷ There is a joint committee that maps out needs and plans all activities related to NYSC deployment in elections. Both INEC and NYSC felt that commitments were routinely met.

TABLE 4: STAFF RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING SATISFACTION

SURVEY QUESTION	NATIONAL EXPERT SURVEY	STATE EXPERT SURVEY
	% OF RESPONDENTS SOMEWHAT OR VERY SATISFIED	
How satisfied are you with the recruitment process of ad hoc staff?	63.64%	55.61%
How satisfied are you with the recruitment process of collation and returning officers?	65.45%	52.72%
How satisfied are you with the training of ad hoc staff in 2019?	61.82%	60.74%
How satisfied are you with the training of collation and returning officers in 2019?	65.45%	59.78%
How satisfied are you with the ability of ad hoc staff to ensure an orderly and safe voting process in 2019?	72.73%	74.68%
How satisfied are you that ad hoc staff treated voters fairly when carrying out their duties during the 2019 general elections?	81.82%	83.97%

Voter education. As mentioned in Section 2.A, stakeholders recognized that voter education is an enormous task and not INEC's exclusive competence. Rather, political parties, civil society, media, institutions of higher learning, and other agencies (including NOA) share this mandate. INEC previously attempted to coordinate and pool the resources of NOA and other actors into an interagency working group on voter education ahead of the 2015 elections. However, it was not completely satisfied with the arrangement.⁴⁸

Transport and logistics. INEC works with key partners on the transport of personnel and materials, including the NURTW and the National Road Safety Corps (NRSC). Stakeholders interviewed stated that INEC was effectively managing its relationships with transport stakeholders. Given the national mandates of these partner agencies, interlocutors believed that INEC had few other options. A majority of NES and SES respondents (52 percent and 61 percent, respectively) were very or fairly satisfied with the use of NURTW vehicles to transport INEC materials and ad hoc staff during the 2019 elections. These agencies maintained positive working relationships and regular communication with their INEC counterparts at state and federal levels. INEC, NURTW, and NRSC have also sought solutions to some of the transport and logistical challenges that have repeatedly impacted elections.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ According to INEC interlocutors, participating agencies do not always offer resources as expected and still look to INEC to fund much of the voter education work as well as associated costs of the working group. INEC plans to revisit the purpose and role of the working group in the near future.

⁴⁹ For example, NRSC expedites measures to allow unlicensed drivers to undertake transport of materials through issuing a temporary permit based on some driving history substantiated through their records. NURTW drivers are now reportedly being required to arrive the night before the election so that, in case an alternative driver or vehicle is needed, there is sufficient time available to source it.

2.C KEY INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING ELECTORAL INTEGRITY ISSUES IN NIGERIA

Stakeholders believed many of the internal issues affecting the credibility of elections and overall management at INEC resulted from INEC being a large bureaucracy whose organizational structure has remained relatively unchanged since its inception.⁵⁰ The institution still suffers from inefficiencies, redundancies, unclear lines of control and responsibility, and nepotism, all of which can adversely impact the quality and integrity of elections. While acknowledging that improvements have occurred as a result of reforms under Chairman Jega and continued by Chairman Yakubu, stakeholders believed that INEC has not fully emerged from this legacy. External challenges include: the failure of the National Assembly and the president to agree on legal reforms; the behavior of external actors like political parties, service providers, and courts; and security.

Executive and management structures. INEC does not have a Chief Electoral Officer who leads and oversees day-to-day operations or elections. Currently, advisers to the Chairman de facto assume some of this responsibility; however, since they lack clear lines of responsibility and accountability, this only works up to a point. As a result, directorates often function in a “siloe” manner, each in charge of their respective operational areas with suboptimal coordination among them. The law also vests responsibilities for election management with the Commissioners while de facto management is performed by staff, which often results in a “two-level” structure in which the same processes or activities are simultaneously being managed by both a Commissioner and a director. Interlocutors regarded this situation as inefficient.

Internal communications. For an institution that has successfully introduced advanced electoral technologies and practices, INEC has been reluctant to embrace more modern and efficient means of communication and coordination. Both within and outside INEC, interlocutors acknowledged it had failed to embrace electronic filing or even the use of email. Several officials noted that activities within INEC may not be shared with fellow Commissioners or staff and that more cooperation and “linkages” are needed across the institution since many election processes involve multiple departments and units.⁵¹

Competition for INEC focus. Stakeholders expressed concerns that INEC can be easily distracted by the clamor for new technologies (e.g., e-voting) without first perfecting existing technologies (e.g., SCRs). Similarly, INEC may be overly focused on operational and other “core” election matters at the expense of other issues like voter participation, inclusion, and political finance, especially in the absence of international support.

Lack of reforms to the electoral legal framework. Amendments to the Electoral Act and other laws are a determining factor in INEC’s ability to improve election management. Stakeholders consistently pointed to the failure of the National Assembly and President Buhari to agree on amendments to the Electoral Act prior to the 2019 general elections as a major reason why further advances in election administration did not happen.⁵² Legal reforms are required to improve voter registration, accreditation, results transmission, and e-voting practices. Problems within the system of electoral dispute resolution in Nigeria also demand changes to the legal framework.⁵³

Flawed primary processes. Political party primaries and the nomination of candidates in Nigeria undermine the integrity of elections in several ways, particularly by distorting the choices available to

⁵⁰ INEC was formed in 1998; however, the staffing has largely been in place since as far back as 1987 under the predecessor National Election Commission.

⁵¹ For example, processes like candidate nomination start with the Directorate of Elections and Political Party Monitoring, but also will involve the Legal Services and Operations and Logistics Directorate at future stages.

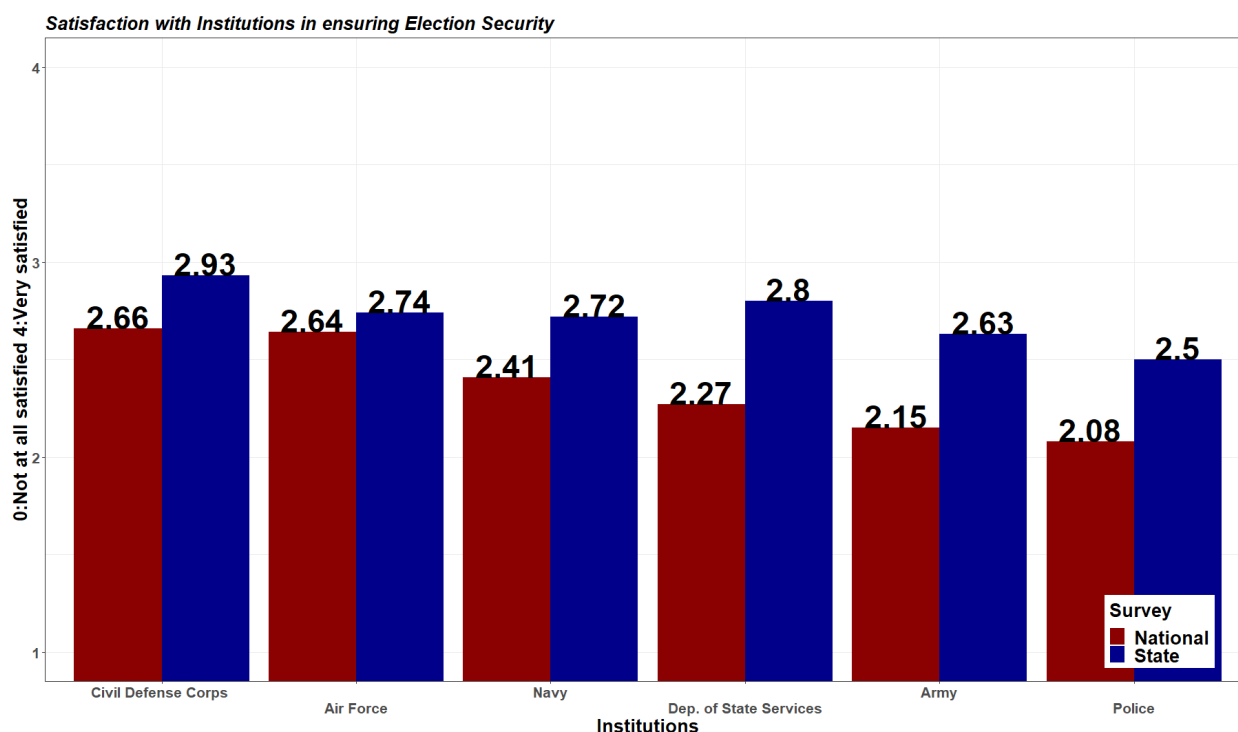
⁵² In contrast, introduction of the 2010 Electoral Act and constitutional reforms is credited with improved elections.

⁵³ For example, powers and authority for dispute resolution in electoral matters in the Electoral Act conflict with the Constitution, which can lead to INEC decisions being taken up in court by candidates or parties to get a more favorable ruling. A lack of precision in the electoral legal framework also reportedly leads INEC to absolve itself from further actions in some cases.

voters in an election. For example, parties may select candidates in a pre-primary process, which is unregulated. Primaries utilizing delegate systems can favor incumbent governments who control the selection of ward and state delegates with voting powers. Parties can also replace legitimately selected primary candidates through various loopholes.⁵⁴ Pre-election court challenges from flawed primaries can also impact election preparations, such as by delaying the printing of ballots.

Failure to create secure voting conditions. The absence of safe voting environments can discourage voters, particularly vulnerable groups. While INEC plays a role in planning and coordinating electoral security (see Section 2.B), the performance of police and other security providers is more likely to be relevant in determining voters' perceptions of the voting environment, as shown in Figure 9 and Table 5. The NES asked respondents their satisfaction with the performance of several institutions involved in election security, with experts expressing the lowest levels of satisfaction with the Nigeria Police Force and the Army.⁵⁵

FIGURE 9: SATISFACTION WITH INSTITUTIONS IN ENSURING ELECTION SECURITY



⁵⁴ While the Electoral Act gives INEC an important role in verifying whether a primary took place in line with a party's constitution, and such findings can and have been used in court to contest primary outcomes, it does not enforce party primary rules. Even if a candidate presents false information or credentials for nomination, INEC is compelled to proceed with the registration of the candidate until the process is stopped by a court judgment (Section 31.5 of the Electoral Act).

⁵⁵ The SES also asked opinions of state experts who, across the different security agencies, showed greater baseline levels of satisfaction with their performance than national experts.

TABLE 5: PERFORMANCE SATISFACTION

SURVEY QUESTION: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE P ERFORMANCE OF THE:	NATIONAL EXPERT SURVEY	STATE EXPERT SURVEY
	% OF RESPONDENTS SOMEWHAT OR VERY SATISFIED	
Police	32.73%	52.40%
Army	34.55%	57.69%
Navy	38.18%	47.12%
Air Force	52.73%	48.08%
Civil Defense Corps	65.45%	72.76%
Dep. of State Services	43.64%	59.78%

Vote-buying and other offenses. The buying of votes to influence voting behavior and electoral outcomes in Nigeria is a widely noted problem.⁵⁶ For many Nigerian citizens, receiving something for their vote is a very powerful incentive—with some voters selling the only valuable “commodity” they have. Stakeholders, therefore, questioned INEC’s ability to do much to thwart the buying and selling of votes (for example, through voter and civic education programs). Stakeholders also singled out the high level of impunity for electoral offenses (including vote-buying) in Nigeria. EMBs’ efforts to conduct otherwise credible elections can be undermined by the lack of investigation and prosecution of electoral offenses. Although INEC is empowered to initiate cases for electoral offenses, it exercises it infrequently due to a lack of oversight capacity from insufficient staffing and either the inability or unwillingness of police to collect evidence and pursue investigations.⁵⁷

Reliance on service providers. The dependence on service providers and their responsiveness can present a challenge to election administration. While INEC’s relationships with NURTW, NRSC, and NYSC are mostly positive (see Section 2.B), these external agencies can still jeopardize election logistics on any given day; for example, if ballots, sensitive materials, and staff are ready but the drivers or vehicles to take them to polling stations are not.

Financial autonomy. INEC’s “first-line” budget status is widely considered an asset to the institution’s ability to organize credible elections. INEC is also one of the few EMBs in Africa that can retain surplus budget funds from electoral expenses and invest them in other initiatives as opposed to returning funds to the state treasury. At the same time, interlocutors raised concerns that INEC is subject to “tranche-based” funding, which may not be released with sufficient time to cover certain payments, adversely impacting electoral preparations and operations. Budget autonomy for SIECs is generally much worse (see below).

Climatic and infrastructure conditions. Weather, particularly in the South and Niger Delta regions, and internal infrastructure (road, air, and sea networks) also pose consistent challenges to election administration in Nigeria. Such conditions have demanded careful and decentralized planning by election officials.

Common challenges for SIECs. SIECs reported different challenges, which appeared to correlate with characteristics of SIECs’ operating status, funding, and resources. A common challenge is the lack of permanent staff, office space, and even basic supplies. SIECs also reported dependence on civil service

⁵⁶ IFES survey data indicates that during the 2007, 2015, and 2019 elections, approximately 24 percent of respondents experienced vote-buying. Meanwhile, 69 percent of SES respondents considered vote-buying widespread or somewhat frequent.

⁵⁷ INEC has legal officers who can pursue these cases, but it mainly subcontracts outside lawyers if needed.

staff who are seconded to manage key roles, who may not feel directly accountable to the Commission. The fact that Commissioners have little autonomy regarding tenure impedes both election integrity and long-term planning. With few exceptions, SIECs' expenditures are entirely dependent on governors' decisions to release funds for elections, with little or no budget for routine expenses, capacity-building, or other organizational development and growth.⁵⁸ SIECs are also challenged by the lack of a fixed schedule for local council elections.

5.0 EFFECTIVENESS OF SERP INVESTMENTS (RQ3)

SERP supported Nigeria's national and state-level election authorities to implement new methodologies and approaches to improve internal operations, staff capacity, and electoral administration in advance of Nigeria's 2015 and 2019 general elections as well as off-cycle state elections in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018.

3.A STRENGTHENING OF INTERNAL OPERATIONS BY SERP

Institutionalization of new monitoring and evaluation practices and tools. SERP's Final Report highlights INEC's institutionalization of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practices as a key outcome of its assistance, resulting in improved electoral planning and operations.

INEC's Planning Department developed an M&E Framework and Dashboard with support from SERP. Using a series of custom indicators, these tools enabled INEC to collect sufficient data and track progress against the 2017–2021 Strategic Plan as well as the 2019 EPP. SERP also trained representatives of INEC's units and directorates on M&E, as well as its leadership on M&E as a tool for increasing productivity.

With SERP support, INEC implemented the EMS to improve the monitoring of EPP implementation for the 2015 and 2019 general elections. Stakeholders believed this made a significant contribution to election management in Nigeria, including by facilitating interdepartmental coordination. The activity helped reestablish an EMS Secretariat ahead of the 2019 general elections to oversee the EMS and the implementation of a data collection tool to solicit field-level data throughout the electoral cycle and increase responsiveness to changes or obstacles that could impede electoral operations. SERP also assisted INEC's Election Risk Management team in drafting risk registers, risk maps, and risk checklists to help staff across all administrative levels identify and prioritize risk-prone areas across the country.

Furthering inclusion policies and practices. Stakeholders highlighted the significant work of SERP to enhance participation in elections by marginalized groups and vulnerable populations.⁵⁹ The activity contributed to INEC's first Framework on Access and Participation of Persons with Disabilities, articulating the guidelines, regulations, and processes to improve PWD access and participation. The framework also aided the Commission in measuring its progress and adherence to relevant objectives contained in its 2017–2021 Strategic Plan. International election observer reports recognized positive impacts of this framework, including the introduction of a Braille Ballot Guide and a form that counts voters with disabilities.⁶⁰ At the same time, observers noted that measures to enhance PWD access were not consistently implemented.⁶¹ NES and SES respondents also showed low levels of satisfaction with INEC's efforts in this area (see Table 3 in Section 2.A). INEC also created an Internally Displaced Person

⁵⁸ Only Delta SIEC reported having a "first-line" charge, meaning it receives funding statutorily and independently from the governor and state treasury.

⁵⁹ The NES and SES asked respondents "How satisfied are you with INEC's effectiveness in increasing participation of marginalized populations (e.g. rural voters, minority language speakers, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons) during the 2019 general elections?," with 53 percent (national) and 62 percent (state) of experts reporting being very or fairly satisfied.

⁶⁰ International Republican Institute (IRI)/National Democratic Institute (NDI) Nigeria International Election Observation Mission Final Report, p. 22.

⁶¹ "INEC undertook consultations with DPOs and made positive commitments in its framework but did not sufficiently implement its plans. Assistive devices, such as Braille ballots, tactile ballot guides or magnifying glasses, were available in less than 10 percent of polling units observed..." EU Observation Mission Final Report, 2019, p. 51.

(IDP) Taskforce to study ways to improve IDP enfranchisement ahead of the 2015 general elections, resulting in amended regulations to increase participation. SERP partnered with the IDP Taskforce to develop an IDP Voting Framework to monitor electoral access in the 2019 general elections.⁶²

SERP made a concerted effort to promote gender mainstreaming within INEC and to support its efforts to increase female voter participation. For example, the activity facilitated the INEC Gender Policy and Action Plan, which calls for the development and implementation of gender-responsive policies, plans, and operations.⁶³

INEC's Gender Division implemented a new Election Observation Checklist—a tool used to track sex-disaggregated data among polling staff and voters, which improved the division's ability to monitor and evaluate gender mainstreaming progress against the Gender Policy and Action Plan. INEC's Voter Education Department also used the data to design voter education campaigns and materials aimed at increasing female voter participation. Additionally, INEC's Gender Department, through SERP assistance, developed a Voter Information and Statistics Form, which captured voter data by sex as part of polling procedures.

With SERP support, INEC also concluded a Gender Personnel Audit, which assessed the number and sex of both headquarters and state office staff as well as their positions and pay grades. It revealed a 1 percent increase in the recruitment of female staff between 2014 (29 percent) and 2016 (30 percent), with men overwhelmingly employed in more senior-level positions.⁶⁴

In partnership with INEC's CSO Liaison and the Nigerian CSO Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth, and Advancement (YIAGA), SERP developed a Youth Strategy Document that serves as a reference for INEC on youth (ages 18–35) engagement and participation in the electoral process.

Introduction of strategic communications tools. With SERP support, INEC adopted a Strategic Communications Timeline ahead of general elections to better track and communicate key operational dates and activities. The timeline was used to update the Commission's communications matrix, its tool for communication of critical information to stakeholders. Additionally, the activity helped INEC to develop Standard Operating Procedures for Communications, which resulted in a more user-friendly INEC website, among other achievements.⁶⁵ Likewise, SERP successfully recommended that INEC conduct daily press briefings as a communications standard operating procedure following the postponement of the February 16, 2019 poll. SERP also assisted the FOSIECON to refurbish its website to enhance the visibility and transparency of SIECs' activities. The activity also supported a training on developing website content for the FOSIECON Web Administrators and Public Relations Officers.

Participatory strategic planning. Stakeholders reported a noticeable increase in INEC's development and growth in the past decade, which was partially attributed to the institution's commitment to strategic planning. Following the adoption of INEC's first Strategic Plan in 2012, SERP activities focused on a review of this plan and the development of a new 2017–2021 Strategic Plan. SERP staff and consultants supported the review process and draft plan, as well as validation with more than 400 state-level election officers and external stakeholders. As mentioned above, this support also included the development of

⁶² International election observers reported some progress in IDP access to the electoral process, including the introduction of regulations to allow IDPs residing in camps outside their home state to participate in presidential elections, and for those displaced within their home state to vote in both national and state-level elections. However, they also highlight continued failures in this area, including the late adoption of new IDP regulations ahead of the 2019 general election, insufficient public information on IDP voting, and the absence of regulations for IDPs residing in out-of-state host communities. EU Observation Mission Final Report, 2019, p. 51.

⁶³ INEC's Gender Department also reported an increased interest from other departments in budgeting for gender mainstreaming, which it attributed to gender sensitivity training supported by SERP. SERP Training Impact Assessment 2016–2017, p. 14.

⁶⁴ INEC Gender Personnel Audit. INEC Gender Division, September 2017, p. 2. There were no other reports provided that address this question beyond 2016.

⁶⁵ Sixty-seven percent of national experts and 62 percent of state experts were very or fairly satisfied with the INEC website. IFES public opinion surveys since 2014 also asked about the INEC website. Between 2014 and 2019, awareness of INEC's website increased from 20 percent to 27 percent.

tools to equip INEC with the means to monitor progress on the plan. Interlocutors' sense was that most INEC activities are firmly guided by this plan. At the SIEC level, SERP worked with Lagos, Kano, Anambra, Ekiti, and Osun SIECs on strategic planning.⁶⁶

Advancing training capacities. Stakeholders stated that SERP's most important contributions included its staff capacity-building activities, particularly its work with TEI. With SERP support, INEC successfully adopted and implemented the 2015–2019 Training Plan, TEI's first long-term plan designed to more systematically address workforce development and capacity-building. With SERP support, TEI developed five separate training curricula to address the training needs of both INEC's and SIECs' permanent and ad hoc workforce. Curricula addressed election administration, operations, logistics, strategic and financial planning, as well as diversity and inclusion. With SERP assistance, TEI developed training reference manuals, including an Election Officials' Manual for the 2015 and 2019 general elections and various off-cycle elections. SERP also trained Assistant Electoral Officers in each of INEC's state-level offices to serve as voter information subject matter resources and trainers in their respective states and increased the number of Building Resources in Democracy, Governance, and Elections (BRIDGE)-qualified trainers within INEC and TEI.⁶⁷

According to activity reports, 6,503 INEC staff (3,889 male and 2,614 female) received capacity-building training from SERP.⁶⁸ TEI's pool of trainers also increased from 87 to 861, allowing it to better address the training needs of INEC and SIEC permanent staff as well as ad hoc officials (see also Section 3.B). Another 2,150 staff from 25 SIECs were provided with the skills to conduct training for ad hoc poll worker staff ahead of local council election. Of the 8,653 election officials who received direct training over the course of SERP I, 7,452 were administered pre- and post-training evaluations, with 69 percent reporting increased job knowledge.

Following the third year of the program, SERP conducted a training assessment to measure impact, document successes, and make recommendations for improvements to training initiatives. The assessment revealed an overall increase in knowledge among national- and state-level Commission staff across the full range of training topics. Training participants asserted that the training style introduced by SERP enhanced their ability to engage with the material, retain knowledge, and reiterate key points. They also attributed to the training an increase in coordination amongst the different state-level offices of INEC.⁶⁹

3.B STRENGTHENING OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES THROUGH SERP

Operations oversight and support. As discussed in Research Question 2, stakeholders recognized INEC's increased capacities in election planning and operations. Many of these increases were the result of SERP's support.

SERP assisted INEC with the 2019 EPP process to develop an integrated, single approach to election planning across the institution. This included the introduction of a key innovation in the design and rollout of a data-gathering tool to solicit internal stakeholder feedback on the plan. SERP also facilitated INEC consultations with external stakeholders on the needs of marginalized and underserved groups in the electoral process. INEC applied the M&E Framework and Dashboard tools to track EPP achievements.

SERP was also instrumental in INEC's adoption and rollout of the EOSCs at the national and state levels to enhance the Commission's ability to track staff and material deployments, SCR malfunctions, and

⁶⁶ SERP Training Impact Assessment 2016–2017, p. 16. At least one SIEC, Lagos, adopted a plan with SERP's assistance. Two other SIECs interviewed, Delta and Kaduna, reported also working on strategic planning.

⁶⁷ [BRIDGE](#) is an internationally recognized, modular training methodology for election officials and other stakeholders.

⁶⁸ Totals are for the SERP I activities. Cumulative figures were not yet available for SERP II.

⁶⁹ For example, INEC state-level offices created a WhatsApp group to share ideas on the development of regionally appropriate voter education messages and materials, including for minority language groups. See IFES Training Impact Assessment (2016–2017), p. 12.

election day threats. They also enabled polling officials to solicit support to resolve issues that arose in the field. Importantly, EOSCs decentralized many aspects of election day management and oversight. SERP also supported the design of the Election Support Center tool used by Kaduna, Rivers, and Imo SIECs in tracking election day operations. Currently, SERP is contributing to android-based applications like the Compliance and Threat Data Acquisition and Sharing System (CT-DASS) for managing voter registration and election day issues and was instrumental in convincing INEC leadership to support immediate online posting of election results.⁷⁰

Training of ad hoc election staff and other actors. Numerous SERP activities contributed to increases in the capacities of election staff. TEI-certified trainers in each of the 36 states and the FCT oversaw first-level cascade training of three million ad hoc poll workers engaged in the 2015 and 2019 general elections and 2014–2018 off-cycle elections. SERP supported INEC in electoral security trainings, working with 37 training officers to effectively cascade electoral security training across the country. SERP also worked with 25 SIECs to conduct poll worker trainings for local elections.

Through SERP, INEC trained 42 EOSC Master Trainers drawn from its Electoral Operations, Information and Communications Technology, and Voter Registration departments and 70 state supervisors from all 36 states and the FCT. Trainings focused on the framework, tools, management, and process flow of the EOSC.

SERP helped the INEC Information and Communications Technology Department design and deliver its first-ever training on the use and maintenance of the SCRs and developed a reference manual for polling staff on election day ahead of the 2019 general elections. Trainings focused on creating a cadre of master trainers who later trained an additional 768 trainers to lead trainings of polling staff. Interlocutors believed these trainings were critical in both reducing the number of issues with the SCRs and enabling the reprogramming of SCRs in a matter of days when the election was postponed. Both the NES and SES asked respondents about their satisfaction with the functionality of the SCR in 2019, with 63 percent and 62 percent respectively either very or fairly satisfied. Observers also reported an overall decrease in SCR failures and an increase in instances in which polling staff were able to resolve failures in a timely manner.⁷¹

Additionally, SERP trained 142 political party representatives on campaign finance laws, regulations, and reporting requirements. The activity provided similar training to CSO representatives and equipped them with skills to monitor, document, and advocate for political party compliance, as well as with subgrants to perform these activities.

To improve Nigeria's election dispute resolution processes, SERP partnered with the Court of Appeals in providing trainings for Election Petition Tribunal (EPT) judges prior to the 2015 and 2019 general elections. In total, 525 judges received training on newly amended election laws. According to the SERP Final Report, case resolution occurred more quickly in 2015 than in previous elections. Similarly, election observers highlighted that training for EPT judges contributed to more effective case management in 2019.⁷² SERP also provided trainings to election monitors on EPT proceedings and case-closing that resulted in increased transparency of electoral disputes.

Voter education, outreach, and communications. As mentioned in Research Question 2, stakeholders widely believed that INEC improved its voter education and outreach efforts, in terms of planning campaigns and designing and procuring materials that reached broad audiences.

With SERP support, INEC and SIECs implemented a variety of voter education and information activities aimed at increasing voter awareness and electoral participation. The activity worked with the INEC Voter Education Department to develop 162 voter education materials disseminated as more than five million

⁷⁰ CT-DASS is designed to facilitate tracking all EOSC responsibilities, including the compliance and threat levels regarding Registration Area Center activity, accreditation, voting, poll closure, and collation.

⁷¹ See National Democratic Institute (NDI)/International Republican Institute (IRI) International Election Observation Final Report, p. 3.

⁷² See the EU Election Observation Nigeria 2019 Final Report, p. 8.

posters, leaflets, and braille materials over multiple elections. Additionally, SERP reached more than 20,000 representatives from political parties, traditional communities, and faith-based organizations and provided them with information on registration and voting procedures, the inclusion of marginalized groups, and peaceful practices for electoral engagement. SERP also disseminated information using broadcast media. Messages included tailored information in local languages for marginalized and underserved groups, especially in rural areas. According to the activity Final Report, SERP's in-person events, radio messages, and print materials reached more than 65 million voting-age Nigerians.⁷³

SERP assisted INEC with strategic communications during both the 2015 and 2019 general elections. In 2019, SERP's involvement was instrumental in improving INEC's public outreach and communications during the critical period after elections were delayed. SERP helped craft and integrate messages across various communication platforms at INEC. As the SERP Final Report highlights, the Strategic Communications Timeline (see Section 3.A) was instrumental in the timely production and dissemination of reports and fact sheets aimed at increasing public awareness on key topics and election day procedures.

Monitoring and identifying electoral violence. SERP implementers believed that, though relatively small, the activity's investments in election violence monitoring and tracking were effective in introducing new methodologies and informing key actors, including INEC and security agencies. In the 2015 and 2019 general elections as well as off-cycle elections, SERP introduced 12 CSOs to its Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) methodology to systematically track and mitigate electoral violence through monitoring, documenting, and reporting early warning signs and incidents. CSOs received subgrants to implement the EVER methodology and provided critical information to relevant authorities for use in determining appropriate actions to prevent or address election-related violence. Trainees were also equipped to train additional field monitors, conduct conflict mapping, and produce violence prevention messages to disseminate via town hall meetings, peace rallies, and media. Observer reports in 2019 highlighted the important contributions of CSOs in identifying early warning signs of electoral violence.⁷⁴

3.C SUSTAINABILITY OF SERP EFFORTS FOR FUTURE ELECTORAL EVENTS

Activity reports and interviews with stakeholders revealed a relatively high degree of institutionalization of the planning and monitoring methodologies introduced or enhanced by SERP. These include the M&E Framework Dashboard used to assess progress toward both the Strategic Plan and EPP, the EMS, and the EOSC. The EMS process is now officially maintained by the Commission's Planning and Monitoring directorate and overseen by an EMSC Secretariat. EMS data is also used by TEI to identify and address future training and capacity-building needs of permanent and ad hoc staff. INEC staff also routinely receive EMS training, and the EMS guide is an official job manual. The EOSC model is now integral to INEC's electoral operations and included in the Commission's operational guidelines. In 2021, INEC will begin work on a 2023 EPP, an indicator of its importance in INEC's electoral planning. INEC is also highly likely to continue to emphasize participatory strategic planning.⁷⁵

Stakeholders also believed the investments in TEI have been instrumental in professionalizing INEC's approach to training. SERP made important contributions in the development of curricula and accreditation of trainers on a variety of topics and needs. With some maintenance, these investments will likely continue to underpin INEC's training capacity. At the same time, the sustainability of SERP's training

⁷³ Survey data show an increased awareness and satisfaction with INEC's voter education. According to IFES public opinion surveys, respondents reported greater awareness of INEC's voter education campaigns over time, from 50 percent in 2014 to 72 percent following the 2015 elections. Between 2015 and 2019, awareness fell back to 63 percent. Sixty-nine percent of NES respondents and 73 percent of SES respondents reported being satisfied with INEC's efforts to increase voter awareness in the 2019 general elections.

⁷⁴ See NDI/IRI International Election Observation Final Report June 2019, p. 26.

⁷⁵ With the possible exception of the Lagos SIEC, it was not possible to ascertain whether the concept of strategic planning has become firmly "rooted" in the management and planning of the SIECs that have ever initiated activities in this area.

of ad hoc and (to an extent) permanent staff will always be impacted by attrition within the organization and the need to recruit anew for electoral events.

It was less clear whether election violence and the monitoring of election petitions efforts would continue absent donor support. This is not unusual where activities are designed to produce a “social good” and have little potential for income generation or donor diversification. At the same time, these methodologies are achieving a kind of sustainability in that they are used by INEC, the National Peace Committee, and other actors to plan for electoral risk. They also appeared to possess something of a “brand” outside the specific SERP activity lifecycle.⁷⁶

The activity’s support for voter education in terms of developing key messages and procuring materials is also not likely to be a highly sustainable investment. It was not possible to determine the sustainability of SERP’s support for the development of voter education strategies, including frameworks that emphasize marginalized groups’ inclusion in elections or institutional support to INEC in areas like graphic design. Several stakeholders raised the point that, absent continued donor support, INEC and SIEC attention to voter education needs may diminish in favor of electoral operations, logistics, voting technologies, and other “core” issues perceived more critical to the administration of elections.

3.D CHALLENGES TO INSTITUTING CHANGES BY INEC AND SIECS SUPPORTED BY SERP

Challenges to instituting changes in INEC and SIECs are similar to some of the challenges to electoral integrity presented in Section 2.C. Both SERP implementers and INEC pointed to a well-established and mutually respectful working partnership that has developed and deepened over many years (predating SERP). SIECs were likewise highly complimentary of the support they have received from USAID and implementing partners.⁷⁷ It is difficult to imagine that the buy-in and volume of support for INEC and SIECs would have been achievable absent this long relationship.

Under SERP, implementers cited some delays in decision-making or obtaining the final “go-ahead” from INEC on activities because interlocutors, often unit and directorate heads, lacked sufficient autonomy to make basic activity decisions absent approval by Commissioners. Along similar lines, it was sometimes necessary to get multiple INEC staff on the same page with regard to activities, which proved challenging and time-consuming. Some activities or specific activity tools, like the EMSC, also were under the purview of advisors to the Chairman at times, rather than institutionalized within the directorates. This reportedly led to less buy-in from the staff, who adopted a “wait and see” approach before embracing the practice.

While INEC is open to SERP implementers, several interlocutors pointed to the need for perseverance in accessing decision-makers. As INEC and SIECs have partners besides USAID, including other international assistance providers, there can also be competition for INEC attention.⁷⁸ INEC leadership also pointed to a need for better communication and coordination of the many donor-funded activities.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ For example, implementers reported that the project’s hotline is well-known and used even where there is no SERP-funded activity, and that they have trained additional CSOs (outside the project activities) in the methodology due to interest.

⁷⁷ SIEC representatives were particularly praiseworthy of SERP assistance, one declaring, “Everything I know about elections I learned from IFES” and another saying, “it is by the grace of God we have had the help of IFES and others.”

⁷⁸ Currently, other projects include the EU-funded European Center for Electoral Support (ECES) work focusing on planning capacities, stakeholder communications, voter registration, party election monitoring, election dispute resolution, and support for FOSIECON. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) previously engaged with INEC in the run-up to both the 2015 and 2019 general elections, and is currently in talks with donors to create a new strategic framework and project document(s).

⁷⁹ It was explained that, in some instances, INEC Commissioners are not fully aware of activities being done with different directorates and, while the work is important, there is a need for the institution to take a more comprehensive view of all activities to see how they fit within INEC’s overall needs.

Challenges in working with SIECs mostly centered on the fact that the activity could only address the needs of a limited number of SIECs, and that capacity-building can be challenged by the ephemeral nature of some of these Commissions.

3.E ACTIVITIES AND AREAS OF FOCUS OF SERP TO CONTINUE BEYOND 2021

Research Question 4 deals at length with activities that can be continued or adapted in the context of future USAID support to EMBs. Broadly speaking, these include the further development of logistics and operations tools, sustained support with strategic communication and outreach, development of the next strategic plan, assistance in the introduction and management of new technologies, and deepening the capacities and reach of TEI.

6.0 USAID/NIGERIA OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRATEGIC INVESTMENT (RQ4)

4.A FUTURE USAID TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO INEC AND SIECS

USAID's continued support of INEC and SIECs can be conditioned on several conclusions drawn from the findings and trends presented in Research Questions 1–3. These conclusions also point to cross-cutting issues that should factor into different areas of technical assistance.

The credibility of elections in Nigeria is affected by external factors and not only the performance of EMBs. While support to improve operations of INEC and SIECs continues to be important, USAID should also focus on other actors, including political parties, the judiciary, the police, the legislature, and governors. The theory of change is that addressing issues through these actors will create an environment for electoral reforms to take root and for the EMB to excel. These challenges require stronger institutional partnerships and programs, yet USAID election administration activities should factor in and support interplay with such actors.

Legal framework reforms are required to affect issues and practices important to perceptions of trust and credibility of elections. Perceptions of independence of INEC and SIECs are heavily conditioned on current appointment practices. Support for advocacy and research in this field is important but, ultimately, these processes will require legislative reform if they are to change. Likewise, substantial improvements to the process of nomination and submission of candidates, resolution of election disputes, and enforcement of punitive measures for electoral violations will require changes to the legal framework. Technical and operational aspects of Nigerian elections—including the full deployment of the biometric SCRs, the online transmission and publication of polling station results, and a potential roll-out of any e-voting technologies—also can be introduced fully only with further amendments to the Electoral Act. Stakeholders such as media, political parties, and civil society groups will also require additional information and sensitizing on these developments.

INEC's existing capacities and the government's financing of federal and state elections suggest sophistication in technical assistance programs. Elections in Nigeria are costly but are also well supported by the state. Donors provide a fraction of the electoral budget and are not required to close funding gaps as often occurs in other West African countries. Assistance programs should avoid subsidizing basic electoral operations and other administrative or running costs and focus almost exclusively on technical inputs that the EMB cannot secure itself.⁸⁰ At the same time, USAID may wish to support important areas that INEC or SIECs might not sufficiently prioritize, such as inclusion programming or even capacity-building in certain technical fields. USAID's assistance should recommend

⁸⁰ Admittedly, SIECs often suffer from a lack of funding for capacity development and the administration of elections.

to these partners that they prioritize these areas and offer technical assistance as they are critical to basic democratic principles of participation, inclusion, transparency, and accountability.

Stakeholders interviewed varied considerably in their assessment of priorities for future USAID work with INEC and SIECs. Collectively, the implication was the importance of continuing many of the activities of SERP I and II programs. Consequently, the task of selecting priority assistance areas and possible activities was challenging. Nevertheless, what follows is a “grouping” of the key areas and activities for continued USAID support to EMBs in Nigeria.

I. INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS OF EMBs

Strengthening INEC’s role in electoral reform. The continued pursuit of electoral reform in Nigeria will probably affect the operations of INEC and SIECs more than any other entity. Outcomes of this process can determine future electoral practices and further INEC and SIEC independence and ultimately the credibility of elections. It is also possible that these reforms will transfer key responsibilities in areas like election offenses or the regulation of political parties through an “unbundling” of INEC.⁸¹

Stakeholders viewed it as significant that several INEC representatives were included among the key experts in the Ken Nnamani-led Constitution and Electoral Reform Committee. USAID and implementing partners should seek to enhance INEC’s ability to play a leadership role in proposing and advocating future reforms. Such activities might assist with INEC’s development of reform papers, convening broad stakeholder events, or directly engaging the House and Senate standing committees on electoral matters. INEC also has an important role to play as an educator on the impact of proposed reforms.⁸²

Undertake institutional and staffing assessments. It is not surprising that an institution as vast as INEC continues to suffer from bureaucratic and structural issues (see Section 2.C). Interlocutors believed it would be helpful to review the progress made since the 2012–2013 INEC audit or to support a similar process in the future. Moreover, a new audit may be more pressing as INEC adopts new election management technologies that require new skill sets and render others obsolete. A formal audit may require high-level policy decisions and commitment, as any kind of staff review tends to be contentious. That said, USAID might obtain INEC commitment for a review of its organizational staffing and structure, with the aim of understanding where the most urgent issues persist, such as staffing gaps and redundancies, ill-suited or ill-defined job descriptions, and under- or over-funded departments and activities. Potentially, this activity could also be a strategy for USAID’s cooperation with SIECs—determining where the commitment to reform is strongest and, in response, offering this organizational and workforce assessment.

Continued support for strategic planning. While strategic planning is a sustainable practice and embraced by INEC, USAID could provide discrete support to the post-2021 long-term strategic plan.⁸³ This assistance might focus on support for a participatory design approach that incorporates a range of institutional inputs from across INEC’s divisions and administrative levels, as well as external stakeholders, to aid the Commission in validating its plan. For SIECs, USAID could tie strategic planning to a model-SIEC approach or support strategic planning through FOSIECON or perhaps TEI (see “Support to SIECs” below).

⁸¹ The creation of a new body(ies), which would take from INEC responsibility for regulating political parties as well as monitoring primary elections, and for addressing electoral offences, has been a long-standing recommendation of civil society and electoral experts. INEC itself has also advocated for these changes.

⁸² Stakeholders also mentioned a need for INEC to stress the timing of reforms, pointing out that previous reform has often come late in the electoral cycle and compromised implementation. USAID could combine this support with work with civil society in advocacy campaigns and similar initiatives, and with contributing diplomatic pressure as needed.

⁸³ The rationale is that a relatively small USAID investment here can go a long way in informing the work and strategic direction of INEC for years to come.

2. INEC CAPACITY-BUILDING IN CRITICAL AREAS OF ELECTION ADMINISTRATION AND INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT.

Building core competencies of permanent staff. INEC is a vast organization with more than 16,000 permanent employees. By its own admission, INEC struggles to train permanent staff in basic management skills and election operations, particularly at the local levels.⁸⁴ USAID should support INEC and TEI to address these needs through further development of TEI curricula and training plans. Training topics could span basic office skills, INEC policies and practices, and organizing elections, including working with emerging electoral technologies.⁸⁵ Given the costs and logistical challenges (made more complex by COVID-19) of trainings, there might be value in exploring online programs (from external sources and those developed within TEI).⁸⁶

Developing research and analytical skills. While INEC values external expertise in the form of technical analyses and other studies provided by USAID, the need for INEC and TEI to develop their own research and analytical capacities was also recognized. USAID programs could both build these research capacities and support INEC studies on issues affecting electoral integrity such as declining voter turnout, invalid ballot rates, and so on. Similarly, USAID should focus on developing INEC's capacities to design voter education messaging and to explore and use social media and other outreach vehicles.

Improving operations and logistics. INEC still experiences difficulty with election operations and logistics and requests more assistance in this area. Stakeholders pointed out that even in a well-run election like in Edo, very few polling stations managed to open on time. USAID could assist INEC with the assessment of the entire election logistics and operations process—including procurement, deployment and use, and retrieval and storage—in order to identify weaknesses. Using this assessment, INEC and USAID might co-create a program to enable INEC to address these deficiencies. The advanced development of EOSCs and other operations methodologies suggests less support will be required in the future; however, USAID could invest in improving tracking and management tools that help INEC identify bottlenecks or gaps at local levels. This includes the development of programs like CT-DASS and the rollout of these methodologies in the field. There is also value in working with TEI and INEC on the *logistics* of polling staff training. While INEC possesses the capacity to carry out such trainings, stakeholders acknowledged challenges in training officials on such a large scale and condensed timeframe.⁸⁷

Communicating and sharing information. Problems of election administration in 2019 had as much to do with communicating the status of election plans as they did with INEC's planning or execution abilities. USAID should continue to provide technical assistance to develop INEC's ability to communicate more effectively with key stakeholders such as media, civil society, and political parties. This could include election event technical assistance, but also a sustained program on media engagement, strategic messaging, and crisis communications. USAID could consider a mapping exercise to streamline communication roles and responsibilities at INEC, including at the state and local levels, and which communication tools (e.g., press conferences, social media, etc.) are most effective at reaching target audiences. Nigeria is also not immune to global trends of disinformation and misinformation around elections. Dispelling fake news and helping to shape narratives should be included in any communications and outreach support.

Stakeholders consistently lauded INEC's openness and willingness to share detailed and disaggregated information and data (for example, on political party registration, voter registration, and voter

⁸⁴ Some stakeholders still questioned INEC's ability to organize national elections, despite recent success in off-cycle elections in Edo and Ondo, simply because these elections were so heavily supported by senior-level staff.

⁸⁵ INEC also expressed the need to identify and prioritize staff needs through a comprehensive training needs assessment (potentially another activity in which USAID can engage).

⁸⁶ One of the lasting impacts of COVID-19 is the realization that more is achievable in Nigeria through remote communications and training environments than previously thought.

⁸⁷ For example, INEC acknowledged that, in the past, trainings have sometimes lacked materials, including polling officials' manuals and equipment for trainers to demonstrate their use and trainees to practice operating them.

participation). More assistance could be useful in managing and organizing that data on different social media platforms and INEC's website so that it is more accessible, including through the use of open data.

3. APPLYING AND ADAPTING NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN ELECTION MANAGEMENT

There will be several opportunities in the coming years to support INEC and potentially SIECs in the area of new technologies in election management. These technologies span almost all areas of elections, including operations and logistics, stakeholder communication, voter registration, tabulation and collation, and results management.

Support to the planning process. International expertise can help an EMB *prioritize* which electoral processes most require technologies, *evaluate* different technological solutions, *identify staffing needs* at all levels that are required to successfully implement a technology, and *strategically plan technology rollout* through a series of pilots as well as testing. USAID activities can also focus on *building transparency* into the process of selecting new election technologies by supporting dialogue with stakeholders on the tendering and selection process and the dissemination of this information.

Support to the implementation of technology. USAID can support several key steps in rolling out new technologies in election management. This includes the *sensitization of stakeholders*, including political parties, civil society, and voters on *what technologies can and cannot do* and their value to an election. USAID can also support the *feedback process*, i.e., how to conduct research and solicit inputs on the effects of a technology as experienced by voters. USAID, through TEI, can also support the development of *specialized training* needed to implement a new election management technology.

4. SUPPORT TO SIECS

SIECs represent an intractable development challenge because they are too numerous, and their needs are too great. Most stakeholders did believe, however, that SIECs were an important institution that requires support.⁸⁸ If SIECs and local government area elections remain a priority for USAID, activities should revolve around *increased advocacy and support for legal reforms to improve SIECs' budget autonomy, commissioner independence and tenure, and the regularity of local elections*. Changing these conditions would go a long way in improving these institutions and would create the requisite building blocks for more credible elections at the local level.

One option to channel additional support for SIECs is through FOSIECON, which can function as a resource entity, providing information and services on topics like establishing SIEC offices, recruiting key staff, basic business practice tools, and even leadership training. FOSIECON can also be an advocate for SIECs at both state and national levels. Still a nascent organization, FOSIECON requires considerable institutional and technical support. USAID might also investigate peer-to-peer opportunities for learning and exchange among SIECs.⁸⁹

Rather than responding to ad hoc requests for support, a USAID program could also identify a handful of the 36 SIECs for support over a sustained period in a "model SIEC" program. The theory of change behind this approach is that improving the legal framework, internal capacities, stakeholder relationships, and

⁸⁸ One theory was that improving local government elections is important to fixing trends in declining voter participation, as these are the elections that people "see" more closely and if the experience is bad, it tarnishes voters' overall outlook. Similarly, interlocutors noted that people do not always distinguish between SIEC and INEC in terms of who organized the elections, so improving the quality of local elections can result in increased trust in INEC (and federal and state elections). Stakeholders also felt that SIECs are unlikely to improve much without external pressure and support. As one interlocutor surmised, "After all, INEC did not get where it is today without help."

⁸⁹ Several SIECs (for example, Kaduna, Lagos and Delta) were highlighted as models to emulate in election management or in their independence and autonomy.

other aspects of election management within these states would create models to emulate and stimulate demand for change across states.⁹⁰

Finally, INEC, potentially through TEI, could be viewed as a partner organization for SIECs' development and growth; for example, by supporting SIEC trainings, operational planning, voter education activities, and other areas where INEC has advanced capacities. SIECs that were interviewed reported maintaining positive relationships with INEC but not in these specific areas.

4.B OTHER KEY ACTORS OR AREAS THAT USAID SHOULD INCLUDE IN ANY FUTURE SUPPORT

As discussed in Research Question 2, even the best-executed election in Nigeria will not be credible absent the partnership and cooperation of other key institutions and actors, including security agencies, the judiciary, and political parties. Civil society will also continue to play an important role in electoral reform, accountability, outreach and education, and other key areas.

Engagement with the electoral security framework. Interlocutors were unanimous about the need to include police and other agencies within ICCES in an election assistance program. Acknowledging limits on USAID's direct engagement with police, security providers could be reached through INEC and TEI, and potentially CSOs, in election sensitization and training programs.⁹¹ Police and paramilitary agencies at all levels require additional training. Topics for police training in elections might include: election day events (and where the role of police starts and ends), how to maintain the integrity of sensitive election materials and chain of custody, the role of other actors (such as Election Officers), the paramountcy of protecting human rights, documenting and collecting evidence of electoral fraud and other criminal acts, etc. As a first step, USAID could support a *training needs assessment* of the entire election security framework in order to refine topics and prioritize resources.

USAID could also support INEC's long-term planning and engagement with security agencies. Processes under the aegis of ICCES appeared elaborate and detailed, with INEC having a clear role in security coordination planning. However, the process might benefit from earlier and more sustained engagement with police and other key actors.⁹² Potentially, an enhanced Code of Conduct (that is more than symbolic), with clear differentiation of responsibilities and redress mechanisms, could be one longer-term initiative and output of this engagement.

Creating more constructive engagement with political parties and the judiciary. USAID support for EMBs should include joint events or similar opportunities to deepen dialogue among INEC, political parties (potentially through the Inter-Party Advisory Council), and judges (potentially through the National Judicial Council). Trainings, such as those of SERP with political parties on election financing or EU-funded trainings of election petition judges, were deemed constructive activities that engaged these actors and improved elections in the areas of political finance and case management. USAID might also explore a longer-term effort in judicial training for elections, perhaps in partnership with the National Judicial Institute. Such activities could be co-supported by other judicial reform or political party assistance activities.⁹³

In parallel with technical assistance, USAID (and the State Department) should also engage at the diplomatic level with these actors. Stakeholders noted that the behavior of Nigerian elites is difficult to

⁹⁰ USAID might set conditions for selecting "model SIECs," such as demonstrated commitments from governors, legal safeguards for the Commission leadership, geographic diversity, or breadth of existing relationships with other SIECs.

⁹¹ At least one Nigerian CSO, CLEEN Foundation, has previously engaged in police training. Potentially, there might also be opportunities for state/INL programs to work with security sector partners in the area of electoral security.

⁹² As one interlocutor put it, "campaign planning for 2023 has already started, so why can't security planning start?"

⁹³ These currently include the Responsive Political Party Program, implemented by IRI, and Electoral Empowerment of Civil Society Project, implemented by NDI, among others.

predict—let alone influence—but “carrot and stick” diplomacy has shown it can make an important contribution at key junctures.⁹⁴

Continued partnerships with civil society. Civic organizations will continue to play an integral role in monitoring and advocating for improved electoral processes in Nigeria.⁹⁵ Civil society can undertake research on election issues and advocate for reforms to strengthen the capacities and independence of INEC and SIECs. Civil society can also provide oversight and improve integrity through monitoring of election administration, election disputes, and other processes. This programming could likely be done through existing or new USAID civil society-focused initiatives.⁹⁶

4.C TYPES OF ASSISTANCE THAT WOULD BE MOST BENEFICIAL TO INEC, SIECS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS RELATED TO ELECTION MANAGEMENT

Per the USAID/Nigeria Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), the Mission is seeking new strategies and approaches as it continues to support Nigeria’s growth and journey to self-reliance.⁹⁷ *How USAID should support INEC and SIECs* is addressed in detail in Section 4.A above; however, highlighted below are a few strategic approaches.

Investment approach. Given the high level of government financing of elections and advanced capacities of INEC, USAID should structure its approach to providing key technical inputs into the business practices and strategic initiatives of INEC, potentially those identified by INEC itself through co-creation of an assistance plan. USAID should also focus on inputs that have a longer impact and build local capacities, such as strategic planning or permanent staff training, as opposed to election event-focused assistance that was prevalent under SERP. There is less justification for procurements, including voter education materials, software licenses, training manuals, or copies of documents—all expenses that were covered under previous USAID election support programs. Future programs should minimize event costs, potentially only co-funding an implementer’s costs of participation, or covering technical contributions of key experts. This is not an “unusual” approach for donor assistance to more advanced EMBs.

The Electoral Institute. USAID could potentially view TEI as both a *recipient* and *provider* of technical assistance. Stakeholders believed that while TEI has professionalized election administration in Nigeria, the Institute has not yet realized its full potential. Further investments by USAID in TEI should expand training capacities to include a broader curriculum for permanent staff, leadership training, and potentially training SIECs and police (see Section 4.B).⁹⁸

Civil society organizations. The important role of civil society in supporting election administration was widely noted by stakeholders, including INEC officials. CSOs in Nigeria can advocate for greater independence and accountability of EMBs and other electoral reforms. They can also partner with INEC in important processes like educational campaigns, mobilization of citizens for voter registration activities, and analytical research on key electoral issues. They may also play a role in training other electoral stakeholders, like security agencies or political parties.

Other sources of capacity development and assistance. Local partners might present additional opportunities to improve election management. INEC currently allows staff to seek outside

⁹⁴ Interlocutors pointed to recent threats of sanctions regarding travel visa bans for political figures who promote electoral fraud or violence ahead of the Edo State election. Many respondents believed this diplomacy was partially responsible for the credible and peaceful outcome of this election.

⁹⁵ Per the NES, 84 percent of experts report being very or fairly satisfied with the performance of civil society observers.

⁹⁶ For example, civil society components within Electoral Empowerment of Civil Society Project, a successor activity to USAID/Nigeria’s former civil society strengthening activity Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement, or direct grants to CSOs. Petition monitoring has been a component of SERP, but it was not clear that this work necessarily needed to be funded through this activity.

⁹⁷ “USAID will adjust its implementation approaches within those sectors to accelerate progress toward a more self-reliant Nigeria. Progress on that journey to self-reliance requires new approaches to USAID’s portfolio.” USAID/Nigeria CDCS, p.9 <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/CDCS-Nigeria-August-2025.pdf>

⁹⁸ In addition, or alternatively, TEI might work with Nigerian police training institutes to develop an election security curriculum.

training to improve administrative skills and advanced capacities such as estate management and GIS. Interlocutors referenced the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies in Kuru, the Nigerian Institute of Management, the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology, and the Lagos Business School as possible training providers for election officials.

4.D EMERGING EXTERNAL FACTORS AND CHALLENGES AFFECTING USAID INVESTMENTS IN ELECTION MANAGEMENT

Changes to the electoral administration responsibilities and structure. Most interlocutors believed changes to the Electoral Act would likely be introduced within the next few months.⁹⁹ USAID programming may need to pivot to support the implementation of those reforms. Likewise, the potential “unbundling” of INEC duties in the future may result in new agencies requiring assistance.¹⁰⁰

Internal crises and deteriorating governance. Nigeria’s human rights situation is deteriorating, with abuses committed regularly by the military, Department of State Services, and police. The government’s arrest and prosecution of civil society leaders and activists of the #EndSARS movement and the future of police reform in Nigeria could affect a range of governance programs. The recent imposition of sanctions on Nigerian politicians by donor countries may also lead to pushback which could impact the approval of programs and activities.

Upcoming electoral events and other activities. Several events are coming up, including a continuous stream of off-cycle and by-elections between December 2020 and the 2023 general elections, as well as local government area elections across states.¹⁰¹ Activities such as long-term capacity-building may be difficult during busy (and unplanned) election periods. Such elections are also where INEC often pilots new systems and procedures, and political parties display new “tactics” that threaten election credibility.¹⁰² Such developments could unexpectedly adjust the focus of programs. INEC will also clearly undertake some form of e-voting in the near term, at least at the pilot level, and an obsession with e-voting may shift INEC’s focus away from other activities. New voter registration practices, administrative reforms, and workload issues could also impact programs.¹⁰³

Other implementers in the electoral assistance space. USAID support will also need to factor in other technical assistance partners. Primarily, this will include the EU-funded project component led by the European Center for Electoral Support (ECES), and potentially a new basket-funded UNDP electoral support program. The future activities of these partners may influence USAID’s programming decisions, as well as challenge access to INEC and SIECs, underscoring the need for close coordination.¹⁰⁴ INEC should also be encouraged to take the lead in the coordination of the different donors and technical assistance providers.

US policy and focus on Nigeria. USAID’s commitment to supporting democratic elections in Nigeria is reflected in the Mission’s 2020–2025 CDCS.¹⁰⁵ However, the US’s overall focus on Nigeria and

⁹⁹ The second reading in the National Assembly of Electoral Act amendments took place in late November.

¹⁰⁰ For example, a separate political party registration office or election dispute tribunal or court.

¹⁰¹ In December 2020, there are elections in 15 constituencies across 11 states, including Senate seats in Abia, Lagos, Imo, and Plateau. There are also off-cycle gubernatorial elections prior to 2023 in Anambra, Ekiti, and Osun States.

¹⁰² For example, it was during some of the off-cycle elections that vote-buying as a tactic became more widespread.

¹⁰³ Beginning with the 2021 Anambra off-cycle gubernatorial election, INEC plans to introduce a revalidation process of all voters with enhanced biometric data capture. INEC is also looking at the possibility of increasing and realigning the current 119,973 polling stations to address urban expansion and movements. In 2021 INEC also plans the mid-term review of its Strategic Plan, and a review of the 2019 EPP.

¹⁰⁴ One option for activity implementation that tends to minimize the need for coordination by beneficiaries is to jointly fund programs with other multilateral and bilateral donors.

¹⁰⁵ Development Objective 3 of the CDCS will build stronger democratic governance by: strengthening conflict prevention, mitigation, and early warning and early response efforts; improving civic voice and engagement; enhancing the credibility of elections; and increasing the accountability and effectiveness of public institutions. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/CDCS-Nigeria-August-2025.pdf>

the region has declined from the levels during the 2015 and 2019 elections. The January 2021 inauguration of the Biden administration will also impact US views and policy, which may influence assistance priorities and funding levels.

Global economic trends and the rising cost of elections in Nigeria. The federal and state government budgets in Nigeria are dependent on oil revenues, and the slump since 2014 in global oil prices continues to reduce revenues for all functions, including elections. Overall, costs of elections are increasing.¹⁰⁶ INEC's plans to revamp voter registration or introduce e-voting and other high-cost activities could be impacted by budget tightening. Severe cuts might lead to the reorganization of INEC and redistribution of its duties.¹⁰⁷ SIECs likewise may face reduced funding from state treasuries.

COVID-19 implications. COVID-19 concerns will persist well into 2021 and may force INEC and SIECs to adapt how they conduct elections, including voter registration, training programs, voter outreach, and election day.¹⁰⁸ It may also further increase the costs of elections.

¹⁰⁶The 2019 general elections cost an estimated 182 billion Naira, a 57 percent increase from 2015.

¹⁰⁷Disagreement between lawmakers over electoral funds can also result in delayed funding, impacting INEC's ability to conduct electoral preparations and operations on time, as occurred ahead of the 2015 and 2019 general elections.

¹⁰⁸ One official felt that if general elections had been scheduled for 2020, they might not have taken place due to the number of public restrictions, problems of supply chains, and other related issues Nigeria faced.

ANNEX I. DESK REPORT



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

NIGERIA ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODY ASSESSMENT DESK REPORT

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development, Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Center under the Learning, Evaluation and Research Activity II (LER II) contract: GS10F0218U/7200AA18M00017.

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ACRONYM LIST

AL	Academic Lead
APC	All Progressives Congress
AT	Assessment Team
CCES	Consultative Committee on Election Security
CSJ	Center for Social Justice
CSO	Civil society organization
CVRS	Continuous Voter Registration System
EMB	Electoral Management Body
EMS	Electoral Management System
EPD	Electoral Process Diagnostic
EPP	European People's Party
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus group discussion
F&F	Free and Fair
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IRB	Institutional Review Board
KII	Key informant interview
LGA	Local Government Association
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NOA	National Orientation Agency
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
NURTW	National Union of Road Transport Workers
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PVC	Permanent voters card
PWD	Person with disabilities
REC	Resident Electoral Commissioner
SCR	Smart card reader
SERP	Support for Electoral Reforms Project
SIEC	State Independent Electoral Commission
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Problems experienced during Nigeria's 2019 general elections and subsequent off-cycle elections highlight a pressing need for continued assistance to the country's electoral stakeholders to address vulnerabilities and strengthen implementation of electoral processes. Examining how the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Nigeria supports Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs)—the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs), in particular—is critical to understanding how such assistance can be improved prior to future electoral events in the country, including the 2023 general elections.

The purpose of this study is to understand and assess the performance of EMBs in Nigeria over the past decade, with a focus on the period corresponding to USAID's Support for Electoral Reforms Project (SERP) in Nigeria. The assessment will explore how USAID/Nigeria should redefine its relationship with INEC and SIECs in order to prioritize its assistance and target strategic investments in advance of the 2023 general elections.

This Assessment Desk Report includes the literature review, research questions, an updated explanation of the assessment methodology, a list of key documents to be consulted, a list of proposed stakeholders to interview, an interview guide, on-line survey instruments, and a tentative schedule of milestones that includes an illustrative schedule of proposed activities. While the assessment will not focus on evaluating the SERP program, it does seek to include an understanding of USAID's interventions through SERP for the period described above for a holistic exploration of how USAID/Nigeria should redefine its relationship with EMBs.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

USAID has provided support to Nigeria's EMBs under various projects since the transition from military rule began in 1998.¹⁰⁹

Most recently, this support has been through SERP and implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) from 2014 until the present day.¹¹⁰ SERP was designed to strengthen the capacity of the Nigerian EMBs and improve their management of electoral processes while building public confidence in elections and their outcomes.

The project is organized around three key results:

1. Improved, effective, professional, and credible Nigerian elections conducted by EMBs.
2. Improved professionalism and knowledge among EMB staff.
3. Improved INEC-implemented voter education campaigns.

To achieve these results, SERP focused on structural and institutional reforms, ongoing improvement to electoral processes, and capacity development of EMBs. The activity also supported INEC and SIECs through the general elections of 2015 and 2019 and numerous off-cycle and by-elections for governors, state legislatures, and local government councils. SERP also partnered with civil society organizations (CSOs) in the areas of campaign finance monitoring, election violence monitoring, and election dispute resolution. IFES also fielded several surveys and other research instruments to measure public sentiment

¹⁰⁹ USAID initially provided support for the 1999 elections, including support for the newly established INEC through IFES. USAID continued its support to INEC and electoral administration until the flawed 2007 elections, after which assistance was terminated. USAID again provided INEC with assistance through IFES prior to the 2011 general elections, which continued as support to INEC and other stakeholders through the Enhancing the Credibility of Nigeria's 2011 Elections project, which ran until May 2014.

¹¹⁰ SERP I ran 2014–2019, while SERP II has run from 2019 and is currently scheduled to end in 2021.

and understanding of key electoral reforms and processes in the country, as well as overall confidence in INEC and other institutions in Nigeria.

Under SERP II, USAID/Nigeria (through IFES) is continuing support to INEC and SIECs to organize credible and peaceful elections and to facilitate wider, more inclusive participation of Nigerian citizens. USAID/Nigeria is also assessing INEC's capacities in the areas of electoral operations, voter education, cybersecurity and information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, election planning and budgeting, and staff capacity through multiple IFES analytical tools.¹¹¹

APPROACH

The methodology for this Assessment will be based upon a combination of desk-based research, individual and group KIs, a review of existing survey data, and an online survey conducted among key experts familiar with Nigerian elections and EMBs.

ASSESSMENT TEAM (AT)

The AT consists of Gavin Weise (Team Lead), Dr. Nicholas Kerr (Academic Lead), Mr. Lazarus Msaaga Apir and Ms. Adebunke Ilori (Local Election Specialists), Ms. Iember Amah and Mr. Emem Udoh (Local Quantitative Research Assistants), and Aleta Starosta (Evaluation Specialist).

INTERVIEWS

Per the approved Concept Note, fieldwork is scheduled to take place over four weeks, beginning in late August 2020.

The research will consist of between 30 and 50 in-depth qualitative events that are predominantly individual interviews, but with the possibility of focus group discussion (FGD) interviews taking place with key informants and stakeholders, including the main stakeholder groups listed below. The interviewees will be selected to gather the views of key stakeholders from within EMBs, implementing organizations, civil society, USAID/Nigeria, and other partners. This list includes representatives from the following stakeholder groups:

- INEC and SIEC commissioners and staff;
- Other government agencies involved in carrying out the elections;
- Political parties as the organizational contestants in elections;
- SERP implementing organizations, including IFES and key subgrantees;
- Other implementers working in elections in Nigeria;
- Observer groups, both national and international;
- Additional experts active in electoral and political reforms in Nigeria; and
- USAID and other key donors supporting elections in Nigeria.

Please refer to Appendix 3 for the full list of proposed interviewees. An illustrative interview guide of themes these interviews will seek to cover is in Appendix 4.

Interviews will be carried out predominantly by the AT lead, with participation by a Cloudburst Evaluation Specialist and Local Election Specialists. Most interviews will be conducted remotely, with a possibility for some onsite meetings between Abuja-based members of the AT and local interlocutors. Remote

¹¹¹ These include IFES' Electoral Process Diagnostic (EPD), the Training Needs Assessment, a Holistic Exposure and Adaptation Testing training impact assessment, and public opinion surveys and focus group discussions.

interviews will be conducted through a combination of telecommunication technologies including phone, Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom, and Google Hangouts.

In addition, Local Election Specialists will carry out a series of scripted KIs with additional stakeholders to expand the scope of the qualitative fieldwork, including regional election officials (at SIECs), state-level political party representatives, some civil society groups, and other stakeholders. The Local Election Specialists will code the interview responses into a SurveyCTO form as they speak with the respondent to ensure uniform note-taking. Remote support to these interviews will include development of the interview guide, pre-interview coaching, regular check-ins, and daily review of interview notes.

The AT will conduct an out-brief teleconference for USAID/Nigeria immediately upon the completion of the fieldwork, which will include an overview of the initial findings. If desired, staff from USAID Washington, DC may also participate in the briefing.

Gender Considerations: Evaluation design, methodology, data collection, analysis, and reports will capture the situations and experiences of both males and females within INEC, SIECs and other partners, and those who have participated in and/or benefited from USAID programming. The AT will consider methods that can identify both positive and negative unintended consequences for women and men or people of other gender identification. The AT will also consider factors that might influence the likelihood that disproportionate numbers of males and females will participate in the Assessment. Data collection instruments and protocols will reflect an understanding of gender roles and constraints in a cultural context as well as reflect local contexts and norms concerning the conditions under which women (or men) feel empowered to speak freely.

ONLINE SURVEYS

In addition to qualitative interviews, the AT, led by the AL, will also design an expert survey to develop indicators on the quality of election management that can be compared across time (e.g., 2007–2019) and across sub-national units (e.g., Nigeria’s 36 states or six geopolitical zones, for the 2019 elections). The intent is for this new data to complement existing public opinion survey data and qualitative data to enhance the AT’s abilities to draw meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness of USAID/IFES support to improve election management and electoral legitimacy in Nigeria. The expert survey will also help in filling gaps in coverage of existing data sources, validating existing sources that may be susceptible to bias, and increasing the representativeness of election management quality assessments. Additionally, expert data may also help validate sub-national trends in the public opinion data, which is often influenced by political and socio-cultural considerations. Expert data will provide information that is representative of the perspectives of stakeholders beyond Lagos and Abuja.

The AT will identify 30–40 national experts who can evaluate INEC’s performance between 2007 and 2019, and 500 experts who can assess INEC sub-national and SIEC performance during the 2019 elections. Experts can be characterized in three groups: 1) civil society professionals with experience in election observation and democracy promotion; 2) academics trained in a social science-related field, particularly those with experience conducting research on politics and governance-related issues; and 3) seasoned media professionals with experience reporting on elections and politics in Nigeria. Importantly, the expert survey will not include current or past INEC officials as respondents.

Both surveys will be delivered through SurveyCTO, an online survey platform, with a goal response rate of 50 percent. Each survey will have an estimated 20–30 questions, varied by expert group-type, that should take approximately 15–20 minutes to complete. The questionnaire will be piloted for length and clarity before launching, and the instrument may be modified based on the results of the pilot.

Expert survey protocols can be found in Appendix 5. Draft expert survey instruments can be found in Appendices 6 and 7.

TRIANGULATION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The AT will triangulate findings and make recommendations based on a careful review of program documents, notes from interviews, online survey results, and other relevant academic literature and reports (including election observer mission reports) related to election management in Nigeria. The entire AT, including the AT Lead, Academic Lead, Local Election Specialists and the Cloudburst Evaluation Specialist, will also hold a virtual meeting to discuss and debate the findings and recommendations prior to sending the draft report to USAID for its review and comments.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The AT will follow all ethical practices for human subject research, protecting respondent confidentiality and sensitive information. This includes applying for and receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight or exemption for the study. Survey respondents will be guaranteed confidentiality and will be able to refuse to answer any of the questions. No findings will be attributed to respondents by name in the report.

The AT will take effort to ensure that the process of conducting qualitative interviews will be as independent as possible. In particular, interviews with EMBs and other project partners will not be conducted together with USAID or IFES staff. To protect respondent confidentiality, data and notes containing identifying information will be stored securely and destroyed at the close of the assessment. The AT will provide the final list of qualitative respondents interviewed to USAID at the close of the evaluation.

RISKS AND LIMITATIONS

While the AT is optimistic about completing this work as described, the current global COVID-19 pandemic presents a rapidly evolving context. At present, interviews are not expected to take place in-person. In the event that a national consultant undertakes in-person interviews, the interviews will follow best health practices, including wearing masks and gloves, using hand sanitizer, and ensuring the interviewer and respondent remain at least two (2) meters apart.

If conditions in Nigeria deteriorate, and for some reason even remote interviews become difficult, Cloudburst will work together with USAID to decide whether the schedule of activities needs to be modified according to the exact nature of the risks or restrictions, taking into consideration health risks to the field-based Local Election Specialists and interview subjects as well as internal security developments.

In addition to general risks such as the limited time and availability of proposed respondents, the willingness of respondents to discuss issues openly and honestly and to share information and insights is also critical to the quality of the analysis. The AT will make every effort to build a strong rapport with respondents by explaining the purpose of the study and choosing a private and comfortable environment to complete the interviews. Due to technological and logistical considerations, interviews will generally be conducted by only one or two interviewers, which should limit any concerns about how results will be used or about intimidation caused by the presence of a multiple-member interview team. However, the risk still exists that respondents may limit their answers. Additionally, as with any primarily qualitative analysis, analysis and conclusions may be skewed by the biases and experiences of the interviewees, which are greatly limited to Abuja and the select regions where SIECs are interviewed. The AT will attempt to counter this bias by collecting wider geographic participation through the online survey.

For the online survey, the main challenge or risk hinges on the importance of being able to contact and attain a high response rate among a diverse set of respondents within the relevant sample frame.

Recall bias: Some of the activities within USAID SERP have been completed several years ago. Respondents may find it difficult to accurately recall efforts related to particular activities or changes over time. This is an inherent limitation of a qualitative retrospective assessment, but the passage of this amount of time affords other opportunities, such as being able to explore sustainability of activities and outcomes, and to draw comparisons with support provided and outcomes over different time periods (such as voter education, polling official training, and other activities during different general election cycles and different phases of a single election cycle). To the extent possible, the AT will attempt to mitigate recall bias by supplementing interview data with available project documents and INEC documents.

SCHEDULE

A tentative schedule of proposed activities including key milestones is presented below. This schedule has shifted slightly from the schedule in the concept note to accommodate the desk review process and September elections in two states that may impact the availability of INEC officials.

ASSESSMENT MILESTONE TENTATIVE SCHEDULE		
TASK	TIMELINE	PROPOSED DEADLINE
Expert survey fieldwork	~6 weeks	September 7 – October 16, 2020
Qualitative field work, including remote KIs, FGDs	~6 weeks	September 7 – October 16, 2020
Virtual out-brief of initial findings with USAID/Nigeria and PowerPoint presentation		October 19, 2020
Submit 30-page (plus appendices) draft Assessment Report to USAID/Nigeria	~3 weeks after virtual out-brief	November 9, 2020
Two half-day virtual feedback workshops with USAID/Nigeria, implementing partners, and donors to share findings and solicit feedback with PowerPoint presentations	~1 week after draft is submitted. Dates will be chosen in consultation with participants.	By November 20, 2020

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

In the first phase of the assessment, the AT has conducted a preliminary review of relevant background literature, project documents, prior assessment studies and analyses, and prior election observation mission reports. Key findings from the background research that influenced the final research questions and the design of the assessment methodology are discussed below. A more detailed analysis of the key findings can be found in the Literature Review, found in Appendix I, and initial analysis of the existing IFES/EPD data, found in Appendix 2.

Literature on recent (post-2007) Nigerian elections coalesce around several initial observations and trends:

- INEC policies and procedures, such as the modified open ballot system, community verification and protection of votes, use of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) as polling staff, change in counting center venues, withholding of names of returning officers (to announce results), and

the introduction of the continuous voter registration exercise, among others, are consistently viewed to have positive impacts on the elections.

- The new technologies introduced by INEC to administer electoral processes – such as the introduction of direct data capture machines and the advent of biometric registration, permanent voters cards (PVCs) and smart card readers (SCRs), and electronic transmission of results – are viewed as improving the credibility of elections and making fraud more difficult. Problems often emerge with the uneven implementation of some of these technologies, such as PVCs and SCRs, including in the cases where a solution fails (e.g., biometric identification, results transmission) and backup procedures are required.
- International and domestic observers have consistently criticized trainings for election staff for overcrowding, lack of practical skills, and focus on other noncritical issues. (See for example the 2019 election observation reports of the EU, NDI, Situation Room, and Yiaga). However, it is unclear the extent to which trainings are systematically assessed by these groups (unlike polling and counting for example). The election day procedures, at least for voting and accreditation, are more rigorously followed and understood by polling staff with successive elections (an exception being the February 23, 2019 elections for national offices). By contrast, counting and tabulation procedures are more inconsistently followed. While observers note such irregularities, there have been no perceptions of systemic fraud committed by election officials since 2007. However, INEC officials were accused of deliberate interference in the results of the September 22 and 27, 2018 Osun gubernatorial election (results which were later overturned by a petitions tribunal).
- Since 2011, INEC has focused significantly on voter education and this has been recognized by observers (e.g., NDI 2011, EU 2019), with the exception of voter education geared toward certain vulnerable groups. For example, there is still a lack of information on voting and registration processes for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and persons with disabilities (PWDs).
- There are several persistent technical and operational weaknesses in Nigeria's elections, such as the on-time opening of polling stations, and deployment of correct/adequate electoral materials. Problems with collation of results and transparency of results are consistently rated as among the more problematic elements of Nigeria's elections.
- The degree of transparency and relationships with stakeholders (in particular civil society and observer groups) is generally assessed more positively after 2007, although there was criticism of INEC's communication with stakeholders in 2019 (see NDI 2019, Yiaga 2019). The degree of openness has also positively correlated with overall assessments of the quality of the administration of elections since 2007.
- Changes in leadership, including prolonged vacancies in key positions, has an impact on the adoption and promulgation of key reforms, the ability of INEC and SIECs to prepare sufficiently for elections, and overall public perceptions of credibility of the institutions and electoral processes.
- Assessments of elections in Nigeria are also conditioned on factors other than INEC's and SIECs' performance, and factors that are not under their direct control or authority. These include: an imperfect legal framework and the tendency to adopt legislative changes too close to an election event; increasing electoral and political violence; vote buying and other corrupt practices; excessive political manipulation and pressure on candidates, voters and election administrators; and electoral campaign financing and the influence of money in politics.

In addition to the literature review, the AT has conducted preliminary analysis of the existing public opinion data, particularly from USAID-funded surveys conducted since 2007. This data has also revealed several noteworthy trends in Nigerians' attitudes toward INEC and the credibility of the electoral process. *Please see also a separately submitted initial IFES Data Analysis report in Annex 6.*

- Overall, public attitudes toward INEC and the credibility of the electoral process improved significantly between 2007 and 2015. Following 2015 and toward 2019, several indicators of INEC performance and electoral credibility fell marginally, while only a minority remained the same or improved.

- Nigerians' perceptions of INEC and its officials have been largely positive between 2007 and 2019, with more than seven in ten respondents expressing confidence in the institution's ability to organize elections. Between 2007 and 2015, confidence in INEC and several dimensions of INEC's perceived performance (independence, professionalism, transparency, voter registration capacity, and election-day operations capacity) improved. However, since 2015, many evaluations such as confidence in INEC and independence have declined substantially. Only a select few evaluations (e.g., evaluations of the accreditation and voting process) have improved between 2015 and 2019. Of the main dimensions of INEC performance, Nigerians consistently ranked the institution's independence as the one they were least satisfied with.
- Nigerian public perceptions of the credibility of the electoral process parallel their opinions of INEC: election credibility was lowest after the 2007 elections, increased to its highest level in 2015 and fell in 2018 and again in 2019, but not to the levels experienced in 2007. These perceptions also correlate to the findings of observers, academics and others in assessments of elections since 2007. Between 2007 and 2019, roughly two-thirds of Nigerians (68 percent) rated their elections as credible; meanwhile, 40 percent of Nigerians reported experiencing election violence, while 25 percent report having been offered material resources in exchange for their votes. Although the trend over time in vote-buying has remained relatively constant, reported experience with violence was lowest following 2015 and highest following the 2019 elections.
- The preliminary analyses also reveal key insights into the impact of INEC reform initiatives on perceptions of electoral credibility. For example, the introduction of the biometric voter registration system (including the PVCs) increased public perceptions of election integrity for 70 percent of Nigerians surveyed in 2015. Meanwhile in 2018, eight in ten respondents associated the use of SCRs with improved electoral integrity, whereas almost all respondents surveyed (91 percent) believed the continuous voter registration system launched nationally in 2018 improved the quality of the voter register.
- These findings in the data review approximate the prevailing literature on assessments of credibility of Nigeria's recent elections – a sharp increase in positive evaluations of election quality post-2007 until a decline after the successful 2015 polls. Both the literature review and data analysis suggest that the introduction of the reforms (including modified open ballot system) and technological improvements (including SCRs and PVCs) were associated with increased perceptions of electoral credibility. The literature points to increased perceptions of INEC independence around the 2011 and 2015 elections (through the appointment of Professor Jega, changes to the qualifications of INEC commissioners, budget rules, as well as operational independence exhibited in administering general elections). This is somewhat reflected in the public opinion data, which shows that perceptions of INEC independence increased between 2007 and 2015, even though this increase is less than perceptions of other dimensions of INEC performance, such as the professionalism of INEC election-day workers. There are many important findings where the literature on elections cannot be backed up by the data available, including assessments of training of officials and relations with other stakeholders, which will require other research methods to further assess.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the observations and preliminary conclusions reached during background research and detailed in the previous section, as well as the literature review and preliminary data analysis (see Appendices 1 and 2), USAID/Nigeria and the AT have identified the following research questions and sub-questions:

5. How have **stakeholder perceptions** of the electoral process in Nigeria changed since the 2007 general elections?
 - a. Is there increased, decreased, or the same level of *trust in INEC and SIECs* since the 2007 elections? Why?

- b. Is there increased, decreased, or the same level of trust in *the credibility of the electoral process* since the 2007 elections? Why?
 - c. Are there *specific aspects of INEC's and SIECs' work* that elicit more satisfaction or dissatisfaction from stakeholders?
- 6. How has INEC's and SIECs' **management and administration of elections** since 2007 impacted electoral integrity?
 - a. Which *operational improvements* introduced to the electoral process by INEC and SIECs have been shown to have had an impact on stakeholder perceptions of the credibility of the electoral process?
 - b. How have INEC's and SIECs' management of *relationships with other institutions* essential to electoral management and administration (i.e., police, army, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps [NSCDC], NYSC, National Orientation Agency [NOA], National Union of Road Transport Workers [NURTW], etc.) affected electoral integrity?
 - c. What have been key internal and external *challenges* INEC and SIECs face in addressing electoral integrity issues in Nigerian elections?
- 7. What **investments in INEC, SIECs and other stakeholders** made by SERP have been the most effective in improving electoral integrity and the quality of elections in Nigeria?
 - a. How have *internal operations* of INEC, SIECs and other stakeholders been strengthened by SERP?
 - b. How have *electoral processes* been strengthened through SERP?
 - c. How *sustainable* are these efforts for future electoral events?
 - d. What have been the *main challenges* in instituting changes by INEC and SIECs supported by SERP?
 - e. Are there *current activities and areas of focus* of SERP that will be important to continue beyond 2021?
- 8. What are the opportunities for USAID/Nigeria to **invest strategically in election management and administration** moving forward?
 - a. How should USAID *continue technical support to INEC and SIECs*?
 - b. Outside of INEC and SIECs, are there *other key actors or areas* related to election management that USAID should include in any future support?
 - c. What *types of assistance* would be most beneficial to INEC, SIECs and other stakeholders related to election management?
 - d. What are the *emerging external factors and challenges* that will affect any future USAID investments in election management?

Table I (below) lists proposed evaluation questions and sub-questions, data sources, and analysis methods to explore each question. They may be modified with the permission of USAID if further quantitative data leads the AT to recommend changes.

TABLE 1: EMB ASSESSMENT RESEARCH QUESTIONS

No.	EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES	METHODOLOGY	INDICATORS
RQ 1: How have stakeholder perceptions of the electoral process in Nigeria changed since the 2007 general elections?				
I.a	Is there increased, decreased, or the same level of <i>trust in INEC and SIECs</i> since the 2007 elections? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFES public opinion data • Expert survey • KIIs (CSOs and IFES) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical analysis of IFES public opinion data • Statistical analysis of expert survey responses • Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived change in trust in INEC and SIECs
I.b	Is there increased, decreased, or the same level of <i>trust in the credibility of the electoral process</i> since the 2007 elections? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFES public opinion data • Observer reports • KIIs (CSOs and IFES) • Expert survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical analysis of IFES public opinion data • Document review, particularly observer reports • Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs • Statistical analysis of expert survey responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception change in the credibility of the election process • Perception change in the freeness and fairness of elections • Change in confidence in the integrity of the vote count • Change in voter experience with fraud, intimidation, violence, vote buying • Change in V-Dem Clean Elections Index (NOTE: USAID Journey to Self-Reliance [J2SR] secondary metric) • Change in voter turnout, presidential (International IDEA) (NOTE: USAID J2SR secondary metric) • Change in voter turnout, parliamentary (International IDEA) (NOTE: USAID J2SR secondary metric)
I.c	Are there <i>specific aspects of INEC's and SIECs' work</i> that elicit more satisfaction or dissatisfaction from stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFES public opinion data • Expert survey • KIIs (CSOs and IFES) • Observer reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical analysis of IFES public opinion data • Statistical analysis of expert survey responses • Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs • Document review, particularly observer reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived satisfaction with impartiality of INEC's and SIECs' work • Perceived satisfaction with professionalism of INEC's and SIECs' work • Perceived satisfaction with transparency of INEC's and SIECs' work • Perceived satisfaction with INEC's and SIECs' voter education work • Perceived satisfaction with INEC's and SIECs' voter registration work • Perceived satisfaction with INEC's and SIECs' election day operations
RQ 2: How has INEC's and SIECs' management and administration of elections since 2007 impacted electoral integrity?				
2.a	Which <i>operational improvements</i> introduced to the electoral process by INEC and SIECs have been shown to have had an impact on stakeholder perceptions of the credibility of the electoral process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFES public opinion data • EPD data • Observer Reports • KIIs • Expert Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical analysis of IFES public opinion data and EPD data • Document review, particularly observer reports • Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of key measures introduced by INEC and SIECs improving credibility of elections • Perception change in INEC's and SIECs' ability to manage key operational processes

No.	EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES	METHODOLOGY	INDICATORS
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistical analysis of expert survey responses 	
2.b	How have INEC's and SIECs' management of <i>relationships with other institutions</i> essential to electoral management and administration (i.e., police, army, NSCDP, NYSC, NOA, NURTW, etc.) affected electoral integrity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert Survey KIIs Observer reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistical analysis of expert survey responses Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs Document review, particularly observer reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception change in INEC's and SIECs' ability to manage key operational processes Perception change in the administration of the voting, counting and tabulation process Perceived satisfaction with INEC's and SIECs' election day operations Perception change in assessments of electoral security on election day
2.c	What have been key internal and external <i>challenges</i> INEC and SIECs face in addressing electoral integrity issues in Nigerian elections?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs Observer reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs Document review, particularly observer reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of external actors' impact on electoral integrity
RQ 3: What investments in INEC, SIECs and other stakeholders made by SERP have been the most effective in improving electoral integrity and the quality of elections in Nigeria?				
3.a	How have <i>internal operations</i> of INEC, SIECs and other stakeholders been strengthened by SERP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert survey KIIs EPD data Project documents INEC documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistical analysis of expert survey data Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs Statistical analysis of EPD data Document review, particularly project progress and related reports Review of INEC strategic plan, gender strategy, training needs assessment and other key documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New methodologies adopted and implemented by INEC/SIECs related to internal operations Change (increase) in staff/personnel capacities Change (increase) in the number of women employed at INEC/SIEC
3.b	How have <i>electoral processes</i> been strengthened through SERP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPD data Project documents INEC documents KIIs Expert Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistical review of EPD data Document review, particularly project progress and related reports Document review of INEC tools and methodologies used for election planning and management Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs Statistical analysis of expert survey data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New methodologies adopted and implemented by INEC/SIECs related to electoral operations Perceived impact of specific electoral reforms New methodologies related to electoral practices (registration, education, polling, counting, tabulation, complaints, etc.) adopted and implemented by INEC/SIECs New INEC regulations related to electoral practices (registration, education, polling, counting, tabulation, complaints etc.) adopted New transparency measures (stakeholder meetings, media appearances, public [web] posting of

No.	EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES	METHODOLOGY	INDICATORS
				important documents, etc.) implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Satisfaction with performance of INEC in key pre-, post-, and election day areas
3.c	How <i>sustainable</i> are these efforts for future electoral events?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project documents ● INEC documents ● KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document review, particularly project progress and related reports ● Document review of INEC regulations related to use of methods and tools in election management ● Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New policies and practices adopted by INEC/SIECs into regulations ● INEC/SIEC budgetary support for new methodologies and internal practices ● Activities that can be conducted without donor support
3.d	What have been the <i>main challenges</i> in instituting changes by INEC and SIECs supported by SERP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expert survey ● Project documents ● KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Statistical analysis of expert survey data ● Document review, particularly project progress and related reports ● Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perception of external actors' impact on electoral management and operations ● Perception of internal threats to electoral management and operations
3.e	Are there <i>current activities and areas of focus</i> of SERP that will be important to continue beyond 2021?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KIIs ● Project documents ● Expert Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs ● Document review, particularly project progress and related reports ● Statistical analysis of expert survey data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identification of current activities critical for successful election management and administration. ● Perceptions of key, ongoing needs of election stakeholder partners.
RQ 4: What are the opportunities for USAID/Nigeria to invest strategically in election management and administration moving forward?				
4.a	How should USAID <i>continue technical support to INEC and SIECs</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observer reports ● KIIs ● Expert survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document review, particularly observer reports ● Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs ● Statistical analysis of expert survey data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key electoral processes to support (voter education, voter registration, results transmission, communications, etc.) ● Departments, functions, and staff types to support within INEC and SIECs ● Election events that may require assistance (off-cycle elections, delimitation, voter roll updates, etc.)
4.b	Outside of INEC and SIECs, are there <i>other key actors or areas</i> related to election management that USAID should include in any future support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observer reports ● KIIs ● Expert survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document review, particularly observer reports ● Coding and qualitative analysis of KIIs ● Statistical analysis of expert survey data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key agencies and processes for technical assistance and support ● Key <i>election-related or relevant processes</i> to support (outside of core election processes)

No.	EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES	METHODOLOGY	INDICATORS
4.c	What <i>types of assistance</i> would be most beneficial to INEC, SIECs and other stakeholders related to election management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIs • Assistance strategies and documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding and qualitative analysis of KIs • Document review, particularly of election assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of types of assistance programs for INEC, SIECs and other stakeholders • Identification of providers of assistance USAID can access
4.d	What are the <i>emerging external factors and challenges</i> that will affect any future USAID investments in election management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIs • USAID documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding and qualitative analysis of KIs • Document review, particularly USAID forecast and policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of political risks to USAID activities in Nigeria • USG budget for assistance to Nigeria • Assessment of global factors and challenges to USAID/Nigeria's programs

APPENDIX I: LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature on Nigerian elections and election administration can be viewed over three chronological periods: the return to civilian rule and multi-party democracy—i.e., the 1999 and 2003 general elections; the marred 2007 general elections; and the subsequent general elections taking place in 2011, 2015, and 2019.

In the period 1999–2003, observers of Nigerian elections frequently single out irregularities in the electoral process with voter registration, poor electoral organization with frequently missed deadlines, voting multiple times and in place of others, vandalized and stolen ballot boxes, and manipulation of turnout and results being key, major deficiencies that plagued each election. At the same time, there was an emphasis on the transition to electoral democracy and new political pluralism, which had an effect of downplaying assessments of technical issues. Many stakeholders also commended the newly created INEC for its effective management during Nigeria's first elections (Nwankwo, 1999; TCC/NDI, 1999), with a recognition that INEC had a limited time to prepare for elections, which impacted voter registration and election-day capacity.

Any tolerance for these irregularities, many and grave as they were, soon evaporated. In contrast to the 1999 elections, 2003 experienced more systematic rigging, manipulation, and fraud (Lewis, 2003). These elections were notably the first under a civilian-led government. Domestic and international observers described the actual elections as relatively peaceful and orderly, but there were over 100 election-related deaths, and many injured in the height of the election campaign period (EU EOM, 2003; HRW, 2011). These problems and others, including the lack of independence of INEC, delays in voter registration, stuffing of ballot boxes and manipulation of results during collation, were the subject of a multitude of recommendations for post-election reforms submitted by election observation missions, think tanks and other stakeholders.

The eventual adoption of the Electoral Act in 2006 provided INEC greater autonomy in financing and governance and ushered in important changes to electoral processes including in voter registration, dispute resolution and campaign financing. Election watchers in Nigeria thus approached the 2007 elections with greater expectations for improved elections and the consolidation of electoral institutions and practices, and democracy in general. The country was now entering its third major election since the transition to electoral democracy in 1999. At the same time, civil society (including domestic observer organizations, media, and academics) and the international community voiced growing alarm over President Olusegun Obasanjo's attempts to obtain a third term and prolong his hold on the presidency—or at least on power and influence—through various maneuvers. INEC, which still lacked sufficient autonomy in key areas (including its overall leadership and budget), would become both victim and accomplice to many schemes, which greatly undermined confidence in the elections and the electoral administration.

Despite the historical significance of a democratic transfer of power, most stakeholders came to regard the 2007 general elections as the worst in the country's history: a continuation of a downward spiral in election quality evident in the 1999 and 2003 elections (Rawlence and Albin-Lackey 2007; Herskovits 2007). Nigerians witnessed widespread electoral irregularities such as underage voting, ballot box stuffing and stealing, voter intimidation, grossly inflated vote totals and turnout, and false announcement of results on an unprecedented scale. The magnitude of electoral violence eclipsed that experienced in 2003. International groups considered the widespread logistical problems among the most problematic it had seen anywhere (NDI, 2007), and the overall electoral process was not deemed credible (EU, 2007). Results were widely considered implausible and domestic observers condemned the elections as the worst ever for Nigeria (TMG, 2007).

Newly elected president Umaru Yar'Adua publicly acknowledged the serious flaws in the 2007 election process and commissioned an Election Reform Committee under former Justice Minister Mohammed Uwais. The committee recommended several changes designed to increase transparency and credibility of Nigeria's elections, including through restructuring some of the INEC authorities to separate commissions, prosecution of electoral offenses, implementing boundary delimitation and providing greater institutional independence of INEC. While committee's findings and recommendations initially went unimplemented, the electoral reform agenda was revitalized by President Goodluck Jonathan shortly after taking office following Yar'Adua's death in 2010. A new electoral law was passed in 2010 (and amended in 2011), furthering INEC independence, strengthening electoral tribunals and criminal liability for electoral offenses, and moving the election date to allow for updated voter registration. The Uwais committee chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega, was later appointed as the new chairman of the INEC. A respected political scientist and democratic activist, this was widely viewed as a positive measure which helped restore credibility and trust in INEC.

Observer groups were unilaterally more positive in their assessment of the 2011 general election and INEC's performance, citing an improved voter registration process using biometrics and measures implemented by INEC which made fraud more difficult such as the two-phase accreditation and voting procedure, the community mandate protection concept, the change in counting venues to increase transparency, the use of the youth service corps as polling officials and academics as returning officers, among other important changes to election administration (NDI, 2011; EU, 2011). A parallel vote count was conducted by a network of civil society groups for the first time in Nigeria, the results of which closely reflected the presidential and several key gubernatorial election results published by INEC (Swift Count 2011). This exercise gave additional credibility to the 2011 election process and work of INEC. There were significant losses in some regions by the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) at the ballot box, and this too may have bolstered opinions on the credibility of election administration. Ultimately, through President Jonathan's commitments to credible elections, the implementation of comprehensive electoral reforms and the appointment of a new, widely respected chairperson of INEC, Nigerians enjoyed the most competitive and transparent elections in the country's history to date (Lewis, 2011; LeVan and Ukata, 2012; Aiyede, 2012).

Notwithstanding these improvements, the main international and domestic observer groups highlighted a number of weaknesses in the organization and administration of elections, including inaccurate voter rolls, polling stations opening late or not at all, ballot box theft, and questionable turnout and results in key incumbent strongholds. After voting had begun for the legislative elections, INEC suddenly postponed the elections, citing the inability to distribute key materials needed for voting in several areas of the country. While this move was criticized by some stakeholders as being politically motivated or evidence of fundamental weaknesses within INEC, it has also been perceived as a "blessing in disguise," affording INEC the opportunity to better prepare and address shortcomings (ICG, 2011). The 2011 elections were also marred by violence, the levels of which exceeded all the other elections combined (Lewis 2011). Post-election violence spurred by anger over a belief that the presidency should have transferred to a northerner became the key focus of all observer groups, quickly moving narratives away from the organization and execution of election day.

Stakeholders were unanimous in their assessment that 2015 was an improved election cycle, and the best to date since 1999. The 2015 elections notably saw a transfer of power from the incumbent PDP and President Goodluck Jonathan to the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC). The APC also swept the National Assembly elections, bringing an end to the PDP's 16-year dominance of the Nigerian political landscape (Anejionu et al., 2016). The fact that these transitions took place through the ballot box in a hotly contested environment gave further credence to the impartiality and resilience of election processes. Election observers noted improvements to technical aspects of elections by INEC, particularly highlighting the voter registration process and the introduction of biometric identification (EU, 2015). Such improvements were considered to make vote rigging and extreme inflation of numbers more difficult than

in previous polls, adding to the credibility of 2015 results. Civil society observers also conducted a parallel vote tabulation as part of their monitoring efforts, which again closely correlated to the official results of INEC, further lending credibility to administration of elections.

At the same time, Nigeria's election watchers continued to point out several underlying deficiencies in election administration, including problems with distributing voting cards, malfunctioning card readers, improper counting procedures, and a lack of safeguarding and transparency measures in the results collation and announcement process. Problems in results collation were singled out as the chief vulnerability to integrity of election administration (EU, 2015; IRI, 2015; Situation Room, 2015). The 2015 elections also had to confront the emerging threat in Nigeria of Boko Haram. INEC postponed elections for six weeks on the advice of Nigeria's National Security Advisor because the military could not guarantee adequate election security due to the ongoing insurgency (Situation Room, 2015). However, the postponement was a source of controversy as civil society and the APC believed that the ruling PDP deliberately orchestrated the delay as a last-ditch effort to bolster voter support (Owen and Usman, 2015).

Many of the problems highlighted in 2015 would again surface in 2019. Observer groups partially attributed this to the failure to enact reforms that would address previous shortcomings (Situation Room 2019). Such reforms were also made impossible or at least delayed by President Muhammadu Buhari's repeated veto of amendments to the Electoral Act and lingering vacancies among the INEC leadership at the central and regional levels throughout 2018. (EU, 2019; YIAGA 2019). INEC's work to address some of these problems in the run-up to 2019 – as evidenced by the introduction of continuous voter registration, adoption of simultaneous accreditation and voting, improvements to the secrecy of the ballot, and advancements in the Smart Card Reader technology – appears to have been assessed positively (NDI/IRI, 2018). However, observer statements on the 2019 general election process (including election day) pointed to numerous problems in election administration, including the failure to complete issuance of voter cards, delays in opening, missing materials, lack of transparency in some voting procedures, and problematic issues with results tabulation. International observer groups had also been critical of INEC's inability to embark on constituency delimitation, per its mandate, resulting in the disproportionality of many electoral districts (NDI/IRI, 2019; EU, 2019).

Further undermining INEC's credibility, INEC postponed the 2019 federal elections just hours before voting, citing logistical challenges with the distribution of sensitive materials to polling stations. Political parties and independent observers alike criticized this postponement, as millions of citizens had already travelled at their own expense to exercise their voting rights. Yet unlike during previous delays that took place in 2011 and 2015, INEC seemed unable to fully resolve these organizational and logistical issues during this period. Several observer missions concluded that INEC had simply misjudged the complexity of the elections (NDI, 2019; YIAGA, 2019).

Problems with election administration, growing voter apathy indicated through low turnout, and what was perceived as a less open and transparent INEC in terms of communication with stakeholders on electoral preparations led domestic and international observer groups to imply, if not outright conclude, that these elections were a step backward or a "lost opportunity." One group also stated that while elections in Nigeria may now produce credible outcomes (where before they did not), that alone does not constitute a good electoral process (YIAGA, 2019).

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APPENDIX 2: IFES/EPD DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

OVERVIEW

As a part of the Nigeria Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) Assessment Report, the AT will analyze public opinion and Electoral Process Diagnostic (EPD) survey data produced by IFES. This analysis plan provides a brief overview of the IFES data sources and their value in assessing the main research questions, our approach to analyzing the data sources and preliminary findings, particularly from the public opinion survey. Finally, the analysis plan explains how additional qualitative and quantitative fieldwork – mainly Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and an Expert Survey – can help to augment the existing public opinion and EPD survey data.

ANALYSIS PLAN: PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY DATA

IFES conducted six pre- and post-election surveys across three electoral cycles in Nigeria: 2007, 2015 and 2019 reflecting the views of approximately 15,000 Nigerians. The data represents a unique and relatively underutilized source of information on public attitudes toward the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other state institutions; public perceptions of the credibility of elections; and, voters' campaign and election-day experiences. The AT will carefully analyze the data to help possibly re-frame where needed and answer several of the core research questions (RQs), particularly RQs 1-2. Meanwhile the data will also inform the AT's approach to answering RQs 3-7.

The AT plans to analyze the public opinion survey data using the following approaches:

- The Academic Lead (AL) with assistance from Cloudburst analysts will adhere to best practices in survey research and merge the data from the six surveys into one database to facilitate trend analysis.
- The AT will identify comparable indicators on respondents' political opinions toward INEC, operational improvements introduced by INEC, and the integrity of the electoral process across the six rounds and analyze the overtime trends. This will allow the AT to answer RQs 1a/b and 2a.
- The AT will conduct statistical analyses of the survey data using correlational and regression-based approaches to understand what impact if any operational improvements introduced by INEC may have had on public credibility of elections (i.e., answer RQ 2b).

To inform the fieldwork methodology, the AT has conducted preliminary analysis of the public opinion data. The data has revealed several noteworthy trends in Nigerians' attitudes toward INEC and the credibility of the electoral process.

- Overall, public attitudes toward INEC and the credibility of the electoral process improved significantly between 2007 and 2015. Following 2015 and toward 2019, several indicators of INEC performance and electoral credibility fell marginally, while only a minority remained the same or improved.¹¹²
- Nigerians' perceptions of INEC and its officials have been largely positive between 2007 and 2019, with more than seven in ten respondents expressing confidence in the institution's ability to organize elections (see Figure 1). Between 2007 and 2015, confidence in INEC and several dimensions of INEC's perceived performance (independence, professionalism, transparency, voter registration capacity, and election-day operations capacity) improved (see Table 1). However, since 2015, many evaluations such as confidence in INEC and independence have declined substantially; whereas others, including poll worker competence have declined only marginally or

¹¹² Figures 1-3 and Tables 1-3 provide a summary of the changes over time in perceptions of INEC performance and the credibility of Nigerian elections since 2007.

remained unchanged (see Table 2). Only a select few evaluations (e.g., evaluations of the accreditation and voting process) have improved between 2015 and 2019 (Table 2). Of the main dimensions of INEC performance, Nigerians consistently ranked the institution's independence as the one they were least satisfied with.

- Nigerian public perceptions of the credibility of the electoral process bear many similarities with their opinions of INEC: election credibility was lowest after the 2007 elections, increased to its highest level in 2015 and fell in 2018 and again in 2019, but not to the levels experienced in 2007 (See Figure 3). Between 2007 and 2019, roughly two-thirds of Nigerians (68 percent) rated their elections as credible; meanwhile, 40 percent of Nigerians reported experiencing election violence, while 25 percent report having been offered material resources in exchange for their votes. Although the trend over time in vote-buying has remained relatively constant, reported experience with violence was highest following the 2019 elections and lowest following 2015 (See Table 7).
- The preliminary analyses also reveal key insights into the impact of INEC reform initiatives on perceptions of electoral credibility. For example, the introduction of the biometric voter registration system (including the permanent voters cards, or PVCs) increased public perceptions of election integrity for 70 percent of Nigerians surveyed in 2015. Meanwhile in 2018, eight in ten respondents associated the use of smart card readers (SCRs) with improved electoral integrity, whereas almost all respondents surveyed (91 percent) believed the continuous voter registration system launched nationally in 2018 improved the quality of the voter register.

ANALYSIS PLAN: EPD SURVEY DATA

IFES conducted the first Nigeria Electoral Process Diagnostic (EPD) survey in 2015 and expects to complete the second EPD during the assessment period (i.e., 2020). The EPD methodology seeks to assess five electoral principles—impartiality, transparency, competence, inclusiveness and sustainability—across five stages of the electoral process—EMB management and operations, voter education, voter registration, party and candidate registration and polling day operations. The 2015 EPD combined structured interviews with INEC leadership and staff from Abuja, political parties and civil society organizations (CSOs), with focus groups based on a purposive sample of Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) and Administrative Secretaries. Overall, the 2015 EPD incorporated the views of approximately 100 respondents and provided both a qualitative assessment and quantitative score for each stage of the electoral process. The AT will carefully analyze the 2015 and 2020 EPD data to help answer several of the core research questions, particularly RQs 3-5. Furthermore, the data will also inform the AT approach to answering RQs 6-7.

The AT will analyze the EPD data based on the following approaches:

- Compare and contrast the qualitative and quantitative findings from the 2015 EPD with the 2020 EPD to examine whether there are stages of the electoral process that INEC has increased or decreased conformity to the core electoral principles (i.e. RQ 3a/b).
- Identify key changes to INEC internal operations and the impact on INEC performance and triangulate findings from the EPD with newly collected data from the KIs, FGDs and the Expert Survey (i.e., RQ 4a/c).
- Identify key changes to INEC electoral processes and the impact on electoral integrity and triangulate findings from the EPD with newly collected data from the KIs, FGDs and the Expert Survey (i.e., RQ 5a/d)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMB ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The initial analysis of the existing IFES data will shape the methodology of the AT's qualitative and quantitative data collection in several ways. Whenever possible, the AT will use the same indicators used in the IFES public opinion data to measure the opinions of stakeholders about Nigeria's EMBs. In particular, the main indicators used to measure dimensions of INEC's performance (e.g., INEC independence, INEC

professionalism, INEC transparency, voter registration, election day operations, and voter education) will be adopted by the AT to ensure that the opinions of experts and key stakeholders can be compared to IFES public opinion data. Similarly, the Expert Survey and KIs will use similar indicators for perceptions of election credibility (e.g. quality of the presidential elections, changes in election quality, incidence of election violence and vote buying) in our interviews. Furthermore, the expert survey's questions on the SIECs will be guided by principles of election management (e.g. impartiality, transparency, competence, inclusiveness and sustainability) that motivates IFES' EPD methodology.

In addition, due to the wealth of existing public opinion information, the KIs will prioritize speaking with stakeholders in INEC, IFES, civil society, donor groups, etc. over speaking to members of the general public.

Most importantly, based on the initial analysis of the IFES data, the AT has identified several limitations of the existing data that can be augmented by additional qualitative and quantitative data collection.

The limitations of the IFES data are as follows:

LIMITATIONS: PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY DATA

- IFES did not collect pre/post-election public opinion data around the 2011 elections.
- Public opinion data does not adequately capture dimensions of INEC performance and the impact on electoral integrity that average citizens may not be able to competently assess.
- Public opinion data does not provide adequate insight into public perceptions of State Independent Electoral Commissions and their role in local government council elections.

LIMITATIONS: EPD SURVEY DATA

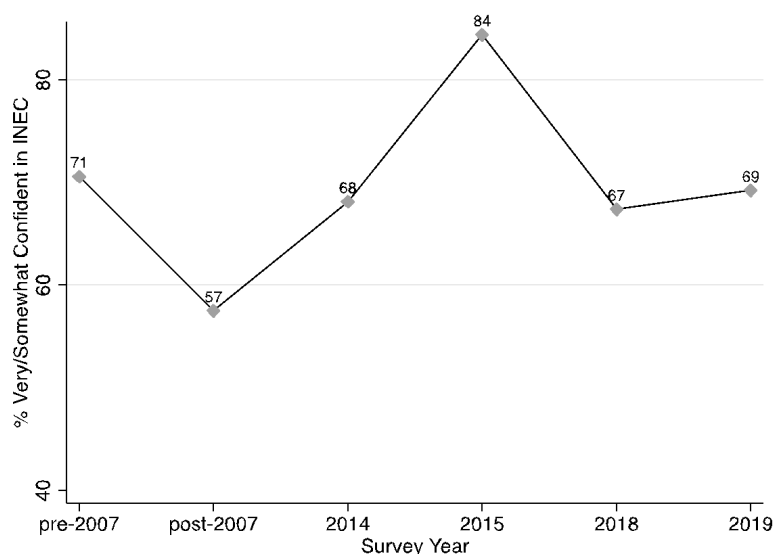
- EPD data does not cover general elections before 2015 and so there is no baseline for comparing the quality of election administration before SERP I.
- EPD data does not explore sub-national trends in the quality of election management.
- The sample frame for EPD respondents includes mainly INEC leadership and staff as well as a handful of election stakeholders working in Abuja, limiting the geographic scope and representativeness of potential election stakeholders.

To address these limitations, the public opinion survey data and EPD survey data will be augmented by additional quantitative data collection. Quantitative data collection will consist of an online national survey ("Expert Survey") based on a sample of approximately 550 election experts including CSO professionals, academics and media professionals. The Expert Survey will help to complement the existing public opinion and EPD data in three ways. First, IFES did not conduct pre/post-election surveys around the 2011 elections, and the EPD data reflects INEC performance since 2014. As a result there is no systematic data to assess popular reactions to one of the most formative periods in the reform of INEC and election administration in Nigeria: the 2011 election cycle. The expert survey seeks to address this gap by gauging experts' views about how public perceptions of INEC changed around 2011 and how INEC performance impacted electoral legitimacy (i.e., answer RQ 1a-b/RQ 2a-b).

Second, there are certain dimensions of the quality of election administration that citizens may have less knowledge of to be able to make reasoned judgements. For instance, citizens may not be in a position to assess the impartiality of Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) in their states or to evaluate the effectiveness of operational improvements that are not in the purview of the public (e.g., INEC training programs for ad-hoc staff; INEC monitoring of campaign finance). Moreover, the EPD data does not disaggregate its findings about INEC performance at the subnational level. Data from the Expert Survey will provide insight into additional dimensions of INEC performance and how these dimensions potentially influence electoral integrity across Nigeria's 36 states (i.e., answer RQ 2a-b and RQ 4-5).

Third, the expert survey will allow the AT to evaluate the performance of State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs), which have been so far underexplored in the public opinion and EPD data. Specifically, the expert survey will: include indicators that gauge various dimensions of SIEC performance, including impartiality, operational capacity and transparency; and assess the impact of SIEC performance on public perceptions of election integrity. Finally the data can allow us to evaluate opportunities for reforming SIECs, including the possible dissolution of SIECs and expansion of INEC's jurisdiction to local government elections.

FIGURE 1: TRENDS IN INEC CONFIDENCE



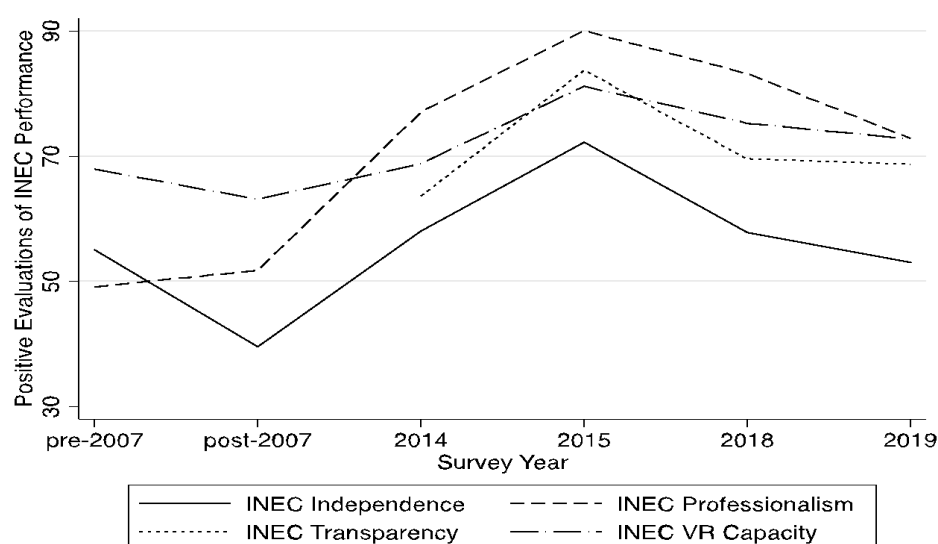
Note: Figure shows proportion of respondents who are very/somewhat confident in INEC's ability to organize elections in Nigeria between 2007 and 2019.

TABLE 1: PROPORTION OF NIGERIANS WHO STRONGLY AGREE/SOMEWHAT AGREE WITH EVALUATIONS OF INEC PERFORMANCE

Dimensions of Performance	Pre-2007	Post-2007	Pre-2015	Post-2015	Pre-2019	Post-2019	Pooled Sample
INEC Independence	55%	40%	58%	72%	58%	53%	56%
INEC Professionalism	49	52	77	90	83	73	71
INEC Transparency	.	.	64	84	70	69	71
Voter Registration	68	63	69	81	75	73	71
Permanent Voters Card	.	.	.	76	.	75	75
Smart Card Readers	.	.	.	81	.	75	78
Observations	2410	2416	2139	2407	2121	2520	

Note: The table shows the proportion of respondents who strongly agree/somewhat agree with statements concerning INEC independence, professionalism, transparency, voter registration management as well as the management of the distribution of permanent voters cards and operation of smart card readers.

FIGURE 2: TRENDS IN INEC PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS



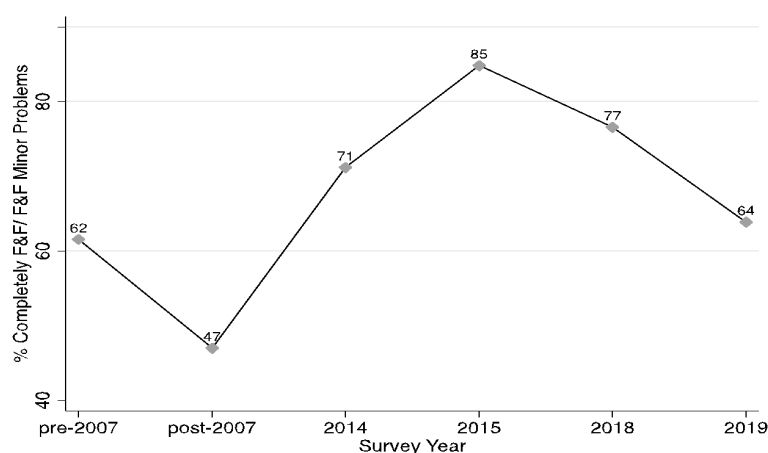
Note: Figure shows the proportion of respondents who strongly agree/somewhat agree with statements concerning INEC independence, professionalism, transparency and voter registration management.

TABLE 2: PROPORTION OF VOTERS VERY/SOMEWHAT SATISFIED WITH INEC ELECTION-DAY PERFORMANCE

Election-Day Performance	Post-2007	Post-2015	Post-2019	Pooled Sample
Poll Worker Impartiality	58%	83%	79%	74%
Poll Worker Competence	65	86	83	78
Election Materials Availability	57	86	84	76
Vote Counting & Tabulation	51	81	78	70
Accreditation Process	.	83	89	86
Smart Card Reader	.	89	88	88
Voting Experience	.	83	72	78
Observations	2416	2003	1953	

Note: The table shows the proportion of respondents who report being very/somewhat satisfied with the following aspects of the elections that occur at polling stations. The responses for the 2007-post election survey are based on several comparable questions that did not necessarily reflect respondents' assessments of these aspects at their polling stations.

FIGURE 3: TRENDS IN PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTION CREDIBILITY



Note: Figure shows proportion of respondents who rated the previous (or upcoming) elections as completely free and fair/free and fair with minor problems.

TABLE 3: NIGERIANS' PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTION CREDIBILITY

Perceptions of Election Credibility	Pre-2007	Post-2007	Pre-2015	Post-2015	Pre-2019	Post-2019	Pooled Sample
Presidential Elections Free and Fair	62%	47%	71%	85%	77%	64%	67%
Election Quality Increased	.	29	.	74	.	38	47
Confidence in Vote Count	.	54	.	79	66	64	66
Fear Election Violence	.	.	70	54	67	53	61
Experience Election Violence	.	41	.	37	.	47	42
Experience Vote Buying	.	25	.	26	.	22	24
Observations	2410	2416	2520	2616	2544	2736	

Note: Table shows proportion of respondents who 1) rate previous and upcoming election as complete free and fair/free and fair with minor problems; 2) report that the most recent election was better than the one four years before; 3) are very/somewhat confident that votes are accurately counted; 4) are very/somewhat concerned about election violence; 5) very often/sometimes/rarely experience election-related violence in the past 12 months; and, 6) report accepting money in exchange for one's vote.

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

The table below contains the top key informants that the team will prioritize speaking with in at least 30 and as many as 50 individual and group interviews during fieldwork. Informants in **bold** represent current priority interviews. Other notes are added as relevant. Each category will be represented in the final assessment.

KEY INFORMANTS	
ORGANIZATION	INTERVIEWEE
Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	1. Prof. Attahiru Jega 2. Prof. Mahmud Yakubu 3. Prof. Mohammed Kuna 4. Commissioner May Agbauche-Mbu 5. Commissioner Hajia Amina Balal Zakari 6. Commissioner Barr. Festus Okoye 7. Commissioner Okechukwu Ibeanu 8. Commissioner Prof. Antonia Taiye Okoosi-Simbine 9. Commissioner Prof. Prince Solomon Adedeji Soyebi
At least two current commissioners will be interviewed depending on recommendations from others (IFES, USAID etc.)	
The intent will be to reach as many dept. directors as possible.	10. INEC Director of Voter Education, Publicity, and Gender Mr Osase Uzzi 11. DG of TEI Dr Saad Umarr Idriss 12. INEC Director of Operations and Logistics Yusuf 13. INEC Director of Elections and Political Party Monitoring Aminu Idriss 14. INEC Director in charge of Elections Management Chima Duraku 15. INEC Director of ICT: Engri. Chidi Nwafor
The intent will be to reach at least four RECs	16. INEC REC Plateau State Commissioner Alieu Pai 17. INEC REC Lagos State Commissioner Sam Olumekun 18. Ondo 2016 and Osun 2018 REC Olusegun Agbaje 19. Anambra REC 2017 Nkwachukwu Orji 20. Ekiti REC 2018 Prof. A.O. Raji 21. Niger REC Prof. Samuel Eggu 22. Kogi 2019 REC Prof. James Apam
State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs)	23. Chairman CROSIEC Dr. Mike Urshie 24. Chairman Lagos SIEC Judge Philips 25. KATSIEC Chairman Katsina, Hon Bako Ibrahim 26. BSIEC Chairman Benue, Loko Tersoo Joseph 27. KADSIEC Chairman Kaduna, Dr Saratu Binta Dikko-Audu
The intent will be to reach at least six SIEC from this list, possibly others.	

KEY INFORMANTS

	28. SIEC Chairman Ebonyi, Jossy Eze 29. SIEC Chairman Delta, Christopher Ofodile Onwuma
Other partners (SERP)	30. National Association for Peaceful Elections in Nigeria (NAPEN) 31. Center for Social Justice (CSJ) 32. Women Advocates Research Documentation Center (WARDC) Dr. Abiola Akiyode 33. DRDI Democratic Action Group (DAG) 34. Forward in Action for Education, Poverty and Malnutrition (FAcE-PaM) 35. Kimpact Youth Development Initiative Bukola Idowu 36. Women Aids Collective (WACOL) 37. Youth Alive Foundation 38. Justice, Development and Peacemakers Center (JDPMC)
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)	39. Director, Monitoring and Evaluation and Public Opinion Research Rakesh Sharma 40. Senior Global Electoral Operations and Administration Advisor Staffan Darnolf 41. Regional Director, Africa: Rushdi Nackerdien 42. IFES Nigeria Deputy Country Director Seray Jah 43. IFES Nigeria Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist Obaje Ukeh 44. Current IFES Nigeria Chief of Party Hermann Thiel 45. Former IFES Nigeria Chief of Party Uloma Osuala 46. Former IFES Nigeria Chief of Party Shalva Kipshidze
Political Parties The intent will be to reach at least four national party representatives from this list. Potentially also additional party representatives at state level.	47. Interparty Advisory Committee (IPAC) 48. All Progressives Congress 49. People's Democratic Party 50. All Progressives Grand Alliance, Dr Victor Ike Oye 51. Social Democratic Party, Prof Tunde Adeniran 52. Allied Peoples Movement chairman, Yusuf Mamman Dantalle 53. Accord Party chairman, Mohammad Nalado
Other State actors	54. Nigeria Police Force 55. Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) 56. Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) 57. National Union of Road transport Worker 58. National Youth Service Corps
Civil Society The intent will be to reach out this group as necessary, but to include	59. Yar'Adua Foundation: Jaqueline Farris/Amara Nwankpa 60. Open Society Initiative West Africa: Jude Ilo, Ayisha Osori 61. Ford Foundation: Innocent Chukwuma

KEY INFORMANTS

at least 2 observation groups/networks.

62. MacArthur Foundation: Dr. Kole Shettima/Dr. Amina Salihu

63. YIAGA Africa: Dr. Abdu Hussaini, Samson Itodo, Cynthia Mbamalu

64. Situation Room: Clement Nwankwo

65. CDD—West Africa: Idayat Hassan

66. BudgIT: Oluseun Onigbinde

67. Enough is Enough (EiE): Yemi Adamolekun

68. Nigerian Women's Trust Fund (NWTf): Mufuliat Fijabi

69. Women's Advocacy, Research & Documentation Cent

70. CLEEN Foundation: Dr. Benson Olugbuo

71. Election Monitor

72. CISLAC

73. Partners for Electoral Reform (PER)

74. ActionAid

External Stakeholders (USAID, Donor Organizations, Embassies, International NGOs)

75. EU IEOM: Hannah Roberts

76. IRI: Sentell Barnes and Angee Wambugu

77. NDI: Aubrey McCutcheon/Stephen Snook

78. DFID: Sam Waddock/Charles Onyemachi/Antoinette Grant

79. EU: Laolu Olawumi

80. West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP): Bridget Osakwe

81. UNDP Nigeria

82. Democracy International

83. ECES: Maria Teresa Mauro

84. Beatrice Reaud

85. Folasade Owolabi

86. Gbemisola Kehinde

87. Adamu Igoche

88. Blair King

89. Julie Denham (DRG EPT)

90. Tara Thwing (DRG Africa)

91. LaTrisha Chappin (DRG Africa—West Africa)

92. Tess McEnery (State—former AID)

Intent is to have one group interview with USAID Nigeria.

Intent is to have one group interview with USAID elections/Africa

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE KII GUIDE

The following interview guide is an illustrative list of all the questions that may be asked to a respondent. Questions may be tailored to the specific informant. Questions 1-36 are designed to complement the substantial quantitative analysis conducted through the existing public opinion and key expert surveys and primarily support Research Questions 1, 2 and 4. Questions 37-111 will be used depending on the interlocutor's area of work and expertise to look more deeply at specific areas and activities supported by SERP and primarily support Research Question 3. A number of these questions may however also be relevant for general inquiries about the performance of INEC and SIECs.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the most important reasons behind changes in the perception of INEC and SIECs since 2007?
2. Do you feel the public has become more aware of INEC and its work since 2007? Of SIECs?
3. In your opinion, in what area of election management do you think INEC is succeeding? Why?
4. In your opinion, in what area of election management do you think INEC is the least successful? Why?
5. How important is the leadership of INEC in terms of the perception of the institution? At the SIECs?
6. How might INEC (or SIECs) improve their perceived level of trust with the public?
7. Do you feel that INEC is competent in key electoral areas like voter registration, voter education, and conducting the election day?
8. How do you characterize INEC's ability to meet electoral deadlines?
9. Do you feel that INEC is successful in promoting and instilling impartiality amongst its polling staff, collation staff, and returning officers?
10. How much confidence does the public have in results released by INEC and SIEC?
11. How much confidence do political parties have in results released by INEC and SIEC?
12. How efficient and impartial is INEC (and SIECs) in dealing with complaints on electoral offenses?
13. Do you feel that more Nigerians are more included in electoral processes in 2019 (and beyond) than in 2015—including women, minority groups, persons with disabilities, youth, and others? Why or why not?
14. Have there been specific changes introduced in elections in Nigeria that have brought about greater public trust and credibility in these processes since 2007? Are there changes that weakened trust and credibility?
15. Do you think INEC and SIECs are more open and transparent about their work and elections in general today than 5 years ago?
16. Is election results information more available today (2019) than in previous elections? How so?
17. Has there been a change in the approach of INEC and SIECs towards political parties and candidates after 2015 (for example, in terms of accessibility, candidate registration and other areas)?
18. How would you characterize the relationship between the INEC and SIECs and CSOs?
19. Do you believe INEC has sufficient tools to provide the conditions for electoral security?
20. How effective is INEC's cooperation and coordination with the different national security agencies?
21. Do you believe INEC and SIECs competently communicate their electoral needs, plans and specific operations to other stakeholders involved in election organization, such as security agencies?
 - Are there specific communication protocols, channels or other practices in use?
22. What are the key challenges (for your institution) in supporting Nigeria's electoral processes?
23. What systems or methods have been established to improve cooperation and coordinate activities between various institutions involved in supporting elections, such as security agencies?

24. How do you believe INEC and SIECs can improve in their organization and management of elections?
 - And in what ways can your institution improve in supporting the organization and management of elections?
25. Are there internal challenges within INEC that impede the ability of the institution to deliver credible elections?
 - And what are the challenges within SIECs impeding their ability to deliver credible elections? Are there variations in this across different SIECs/regions?
26. What external factors have affected the ability of INEC and SIECs to hold credible elections in Nigeria?
27. Which operational aspects of elections do you believe to be the most sustainable in Nigeria? The least?
28. What are the areas of internal management and institutional growth where INEC and SIECs would benefit from USAID assistance?
29. Which of these electoral process areas will be the most important/critical to support beyond 2021 (*remind respondent of areas of current USAID assistance*): 1) electoral planning and management; 2) training and capacity building (short and long term); 3) Voter education; Inclusion (e.g., PWD and gender); 4) campaign/political finance; 5) conflict mitigation? Please explain your answer.
30. Are there additional electoral process areas related to election administration and organization where USAID should prioritize assistance in the future?
31. Are there key institutions (outside of INEC and SIECs) with responsibilities in election management and administration could also benefit from USAID assistance?
32. What forms and types of assistance would be most beneficial to INEC, SIECs, and other stakeholders?
33. What are the key issues affecting the integrity of elections in Nigeria that INEC and SIECs have been unable to address or even influence?
34. How has COVID-19 affected key electoral processes in Nigeria or may affect them in future?
35. Has the INEC been able to influence participation in elections (turnout) in Nigeria? Why or why not?
36. What sources and providers of assistance might be utilized through USAID (i.e., local organizations, regional organizations, companies etc.)?

The following question bank will be used depending on the interlocutor's area of work and expertise to look more deeply at specific areas and activities supported by SERP, particularly Research Questions 3a, 3c, and 3d.

SERP GENERAL INTERNAL PROCESS QUESTIONS

37. What in your opinion has been the most significant institutional change that USAID/IFES technical assistance has helped bring about?
38. How would you describe the balance between support for election activities (2015/2019 and off-cycle) and capacity building to the INEC and SIECs?
39. Where has the INEC (and, if applicable, the SIECs) tried but failed to implement internal changes through USAID support? Why?
40. What challenges and obstacles are unique to the SIECs (e.g., capacity, retention, frequency of events, etc.)?
41. How has USAID/IFES contributed to planning, assessments, reviews, and other stock-taking exercises that have influenced the activities of INEC and SIECs?
42. Do you believe there to be more, less, or about the same emphasis on these types of exercises within INEC/SIECs absent USAID support?

ELECTION MANAGEMENT

43. What are some of the key election management methodologies introduced and adopted by INEC and SIECs through USAID assistance?
44. Do you believe that the INEC has the tools it needs to manage an electoral process as complex as Nigeria's? Why or why not?
 - Do SIECs have the requisite tools and capacities to manage their electoral processes? Why or why not?
45. How did the EMS/EMSC Committee contribute to improved electoral management in the 2015 or 2019 electoral cycles? How was it different (if at all) in these years?
 - How did the EMS data collection tool function to help the INEC (and SIECs) plan and what are some of the results of this (examples)?
46. Can these tools be adopted, refreshed, and implemented absent international technical assistance (are they wholly owned by the INEC/SIEC at this point)?
 - Is the EMS now fully integrated into the electoral management and administrative process of the INEC – or how is not?
47. How effectively or to what extent does the EPP guide INEC through the electoral preparation and execution? Is this sufficient?
48. Do you think the INEC would develop the EPP in the absence of technical assistance? Would it be a different process or product?
49. Do you attribute election operations successes (or failures) to the development and adoption of the EOSC?
 - What are some examples of the EOSC identifying, triaging, or remedying electoral operations?
 - Can you compare/contrast the EOSCs in 2015, 2019, or off-cycle elections? To what do you attribute any differences in tools, capacity, or performance?
50. How would you rate the sustainability of the EOSCs (regional and central) in terms of concept use, staff capacities, methodologies/tools, and/or infrastructure?
 - Absent financial or technical support of USAID, will these EOSC methodologies and tools likely be implemented going forward (or are they already)?

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

51. How has the Strategic Plan informed INEC work on an ongoing basis?
52. What has been the experience with strategic planning at the SIEC level?
53. Which of the many USAID/IFES-supported M&E training programs and other activities had the most impact and why?
 - Do you consider the focus on M&E of training programs to be sufficient?
54. Do you think the INEC would develop and adhere to Strategic Plans and M&E plans in the absence of technical assistance? Would it look different? How?

GENDER/INCLUSION

55. How has USAID/IFES assistance changed the INEC's approach to inclusion of persons with disabilities in the work of INEC or SIEC?
56. Where have the INEC and SIECs had the greatest success in advancing gender equality and inclusion within the institutions? Where have they struggled?
57. What have been the specific outcomes from the adoption of the Gender Policy and Action Plan at the INEC? At SIECs?
58. Has the gender tracking tool and the Election Observation Checklist been used by INEC to track gender issues and data in the run up to 2019 and beyond (and if so how)?

TRAINING

59. How have the INEC's internal capacities to train election staff (permanent and temporary) changed from 2014 to the present (i.e., through two general election periods)?
60. How has the 2015 strategic training plan for the TEI guided the training activities and development of the TEI in general?

61. Did INEC's training activities, capacity development, and other activities adhere to the 2015–19 (strategic) training plan? Why or why not?
62. Where do you feel the TEI's (and, by extension, the INEC and SIECs in general) strengths are in training? Weaknesses?
 - How about local level trainers, regionally accredited trainers, specialized trainers (ICT, VE?), and other corpora of trainers?
63. Which of the five curricula developed at TEI (ETSC, BRIDGE Admin and Logistics, BRIDGE Leadership) have been most widely applied and successful? Why? Which are in use today?
64. What precisely is IFES' role in ongoing training for elections (such as train the trainers events, cascade level training, etc.)? Is it as experts/trainers, curricula design, materials design, conveners and logistics providers, financial subsidizers, etc.? Has this role changed over time?

VOTER EDUCATION

65. How would you assess INEC ability to design, carry out, and organize voter education programing in the period 2015–2019? And SIECs?
66. How has the capacity of those engaged in voter education been strengthened through USAID support (e.g., in strategy development, materials design, campaign planning, M&E)?
67. Where are the largest gaps today (if any) in terms of INEC's abilities to conduct voter education? SIEC's?

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

68. How would you assess the internal capacity of the INEC in the area of communications with stakeholders? What are the main weaknesses and strengths?
69. How do you compare/contrast the support provided by USAID in 2015 with 2019 in the area of strategic communications?
 - Is there support in capacity building of strategic communications between election periods? Support to SIECs?

CAMPAIGN AND POLITICAL FINANCE

70. Which USAID supported campaign finance activities with INEC and SIECs have had the most impact?
71. Has USAID support been at improving campaign finance monitoring methodologies at the local level of election administration?
72. What can INEC and SIECs do better to ensure adherence to, monitoring, and enforcement of campaign financing provisions in Nigeria?

The following question bank will be used depending on the interlocutors area of work and expertise to look more deeply at specific areas and activities supported by SERP, particularly 3b,c,d

SERP GENERAL ELECTORAL PROCESS QUESTIONS

73. What has been the most significant impact of USAID/IFES support to the electoral process in Nigeria?
74. How would you rank these areas of USAID/IFES cooperation and assistance, in terms of the *most important or critical* to making improvements in Nigeria's electoral processes:
 - electoral planning and management;
 - training and capacity building (of permanent and ad hoc staff);
 - voter education;
 - inclusion (e.g., persons with disabilities and gender);
 - campaign/political finance; and
 - conflict identification and mitigation

75. What have been the main *internal* challenges to implementing USAID programs at the INEC and SIECs designed to bring about effective change and improvement in electoral processes?
 - What have been the main external challenges?
76. How would you describe the pattern of assistance provided by USAID/IFES—steady/even, cyclical (peaks and troughs), start-stop, or other?
77. Is there any part of election budgets that are currently being “plugged” by USAID resources? Are there activities supported by USAID/IFES that INEC would likely “drop” absent continued support?

OPERATIONS

78. Do you believe USAID/IFES support to polling station activities was sufficient? Why or why not?
79. What was USAID/IFES principle investment and role with the collation centers (i.e., logistical support, training and capacity building, and/or security, etc.)?
 - Was this sufficient? Why or why not?
80. Moving forward, do you feel the problems cited with the polling stations (concerning late opening, wrong materials, etc.) can be improved with more or different technical assistance/support? How?
81. Moving forward, do you feel additional technical support could improve the voting and tabulation (including collation) processes? How?

VOTER EDUCATION

82. What were the most critical voter education interventions made through SERP? Why were these important?
 - Did SERP address areas of voter education that were underserved or even neglected by INEC or NOA?
83. Do you feel voters’ awareness of electoral processes changed from 2011 to 2015 and 2019? Can this change be attributable to INEC approaches and USAID support?
84. What have been the major challenges (internal or external) to the INEC and SIEC in providing voter education for general elections and off-cycle elections?
85. How has IFES’ role in developing voter education materials in terms of content creation changed from 2015 to 2019?
86. How would election-period voter education efforts and continuing or civic education suffer from a withdrawal of USAID/IFES support? In terms of activities? Audiences?

INCLUSION

87. Has SERP addressed challenges to furthering participation and access to election processes in Nigeria? Why or why not?
88. Has USAID/SEPR addressed specific challenges for participation in elections in Nigeria for PWDs? Why or Why not?
89. Which methodologies and practices (affirmative policies and practices, awareness education, sensitization, administrative and infrastructure improvements, etc.) have proven more successful in terms of furthering inclusion in electoral processes?
90. To what degree is the focus on inclusion now “owned” by the INEC and SIECs and to what degree are they driven by donors and technical assistance providers?
91. What should the INEC and SIECs be doing differently to make a more inclusive electoral process?

TRAINING

92. Do you feel election officials at all levels were better prepared to carry out their duties in 2011, 2015, or 2019? Why?
93. How does SERP support INEC and SIEC in training, particularly in the various Master Trainer and Training of Trainers workshops (i.e., *is it materials development, venue procurement and logistics, IFES experts training directly, etc.*)?

- Where do you feel these USAID/SERP contributions to training have the most impactful? Are most necessary?
94. What challenges remain in training electoral staff at all levels? Are there specific needs at the State or local level?
95. What electoral process or area do you believe would benefit the most from training in 2023 (i.e., voter registration, polling and counting, collation, results, inclusion, etc.)?

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

96. How would you characterize SERP assistance to the reform of the legal framework in the post-2015 election period and currently?
97. What are the gaps in the electoral legal framework that are likely to be addressed in the present period or coming years? Is USAID positioned to support this work?

VOTER REGISTRATION

98. What were SERPs key contributions in the continuous voter registration exercises that began in 2017?
99. Do you believe USAID/IFES should have played a larger role in supporting critical voter registration process? Why or why not?
100. What technical support will be most needed to improve voter lists in future?

CONFLICT/EDR

101. What were the most impactful or tangible interventions in conflict prevention supported by SERP in the 2015 and 2019 elections? Why?
102. Do you believe the activities of CSOs supported by SERP, (tracking and reporting, advocacy to state actors, peace rallies) mitigated conflict and electoral violence and facilitated peaceful polls?
103. Do you believe the conflict mitigation methodologies supported by SERP are sustainable?
104. What were SERPs most significant contributions to the EDR process in Nigeria in 2015 and 2019?
105. What is the nature and balance of the support provided in EDR (between technical/methodological assistance, institutional building assistance, activity or event funding, etc.?)
106. What underlying internal or external factors have seriously impacted the successful resolution of electoral offences in Nigeria?
107. What technical support activities will be most needed to improve EDR in future?

CAMPAIGN AND POLITICAL FINANCE

108. How were the various SERP activities successful in addressing issues in political and campaign finance in Nigeria? In what ways did they not succeed?
109. What key changes came about through the work of civil society monitoring and advocacy of campaign financing and expenditure (supported through USAID/IFES)?
110. What are the remaining challenges in campaign financing that you think that INEC could address?
111. What might assistance in the area of campaign and political finance look like?

CONCLUSION (ALL)

112. Do you have any final comments that you wish to share?
113. Are there any questions that you would like to ask?

APPENDIX 5: EXPERT SURVEY PROTOCOL

OVERVIEW

To supplement the qualitative fieldwork and fill gaps in the existing IFES public opinion and EPD data, the Assessment Team (AT) will conduct a brief online national survey (“Expert Survey”) based on a sample of approximately 550 election experts. There will be two components of the survey: 1) a national-level survey based on a sample of 50 national experts; and, 2) a state-level survey based on a sample of 500 state-level experts, covering all 36 states. The Expert Survey will be led by the Academic Lead (AL) and will allow the AT to develop indicators on the quality of election management that can be compared across time (e.g. 2007-2019) for all of Nigeria’s recent democratic elections and across sub-national units (e.g., Nigeria’s 36 states or six geopolitical zones) for the 2019 elections. Expert Survey data will complement existing data sources and enhance the AT’s ability to draw meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness of donor support on election management quality and electoral legitimacy in Nigeria.

EXPERT SAMPLE FRAME & RECRUITMENT

The sample frame for the expert survey is based on three categories of experts: 1) domestic civil society and international NGO professionals¹¹³ with experience in election observation, democracy promotion and governance; 2) local and internationally-based academics¹¹⁴ trained in a social science-related field, particularly those with experience conducting research on politics and governance-related issues in Nigeria; 3) seasoned media professionals¹¹⁵ with experience reporting on elections and politics in Nigeria. The AL with the help of local research assistants will develop a database of national and state-level experts across the three categories of experts using several approaches, including incorporating existing databases previously developed by CSOs, media, and academic professional organizations. In developing the database, the AT will ensure that it is representative of experts in the 6 geopolitical zones, as well as historically marginalized groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and religious and ethnic minorities.

NATIONAL-LEVEL SURVEY

The main objective of the national-level survey is to assess the quality of election management in Nigeria in 2019 as well as previous general elections since 2007 (i.e., 2015, 2011, 2007). This requires respondents from across the three expert categories who have broad-based knowledge and experience to comparatively assess INEC’s performance and election integrity at the national-level across multiple elections. The AT intends to recruit a sample of 50 or more national-level experts using a multi-modal strategy in which local research assistants and the AL will use email, text messages and phone calls to invite experts to participate in the survey.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ We intend to recruit senior staff working with Nigerian and international NGOs who have several years of experience working on elections and governance-related programs in Nigeria.

¹¹⁴ We intend to recruit academics working at Nigerian and international universities/research institutes whose research interests and recent publications coalesce around issues on election administration, elections, democratization, and governance.

¹¹⁵ We intend to recruit senior journalists working with Nigerian national and regional print, radio, and television media entities, particularly those who have experience reporting on elections and governance-related issues. We will prioritize journalists who are members with the Nigerian Union of Journalists and the Nigerian Guild of Editors.

¹¹⁶ The AT will seek to ensure that the sample reflects the distribution of national-level experts across Nigeria’s six geo-political zones.

STATE-LEVEL SURVEY

The main objective of the state-level survey is to assess the quality of election management by INEC in the 2019 national and state elections and the SIECs in the most recent local government council elections. This requires respondents across the three expert categories to have intimate knowledge and experience with the quality of election management in a specific state or states. The AT intends to recruit a sample of approximately 20 experts per state. Local research assistants will assist the AL to recruit state-level experts using email, text messages and phone calls from the expert database. We expect that around 30 percent of the experts will be able to evaluate more than one state (in a geopolitical zone) based on their expertise, and experts do not necessarily have to reside in states that they are asked to evaluate. We intend to recruit a total expert pool of around 505 experts, and expect a 50 percent response rate, for a sample size of 252. Overall, the goal is to ensure that each state has at least six unique experts.¹¹⁷ The AT will put several procedures in place to ensure the qualifications and authenticity of experts, such as verifying experts' credentials with professional organizations and state-level liaisons.¹¹⁸

SURVEY DATA COLLECTION

The main mode of data collection for the survey is an online self-administered questionnaire using Survey CTO. We intend to field the survey between August 5 and September 5. The survey can be accessed by computer and other handheld devices, including tablets and mobile phones. The online mode is the most ideal, given the constraints presented by COVID-19. However, we recognize that several experts, especially at the state-level, may be unable or unwilling to conduct the survey online. In those cases, local researchers will be trained to conduct interviews with potential respondents by phone. The AT will apply for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through Salus IRB. All the necessary steps will be taken to protect the confidentiality of information obtained from experts. This includes de-identifying the data collected through the online survey platform.

SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

Survey data will be analyzed in accordance with a data analysis plan produced by the AL, with support from two Cloudburst analysts. The analysis will focus primarily on answering Research Questions (RQs) 3, 5 and 6. Additionally, the data analysis will seek to answer RQs 1-2 so as to triangulate the findings from IFES public opinion data.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey instruments for the national-level survey and the state-level survey will include approximately 30-40 questions excluding demographics. They are included as Appendices 5 and 6.

¹¹⁷ The projected minimum of six experts per state is consistent with best practices for cross-time and cross-unit expert surveys on election-related research. For example, the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-DEM) uses an average of five experts for its cross-national and sub-national surveys. Meanwhile, the Electoral Integrity Project (EIP) used an average of ten for its recent sub-national expert survey in the United States.

¹¹⁸ For each state, the local research assistants have identified one state-level liaison who can help to verify the credentials of potential state-level experts.

APPENDIX 6: NATIONAL LEVEL EXPERT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

[Introductory Script]

Thank you for participating in this brief online survey. You have been selected based on your knowledge of Nigeria's electoral processes and systems. This survey will collect information about your opinions on the quality of elections and election management in Nigeria. Completing this survey should take about 15-20 minutes.

No findings will be attributed to respondents by name. You have the right to say no to participating in this survey. If you have any questions about this survey or how the information you provide will be used, you may contact Dr. Nicholas Kerr, Principal Researcher via email: nicholaskerr@ufl.edu.

	Yes	No
1. Do you agree to participate?		

[SECTION 1: PRINCIPLES OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT: INEC]

We would like to start with a few statements about INEC and its commissioners in recent elections. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. Do you agree or disagree that the INEC chairperson and commissioners displayed independence from the federal government in organizing the 2019 general elections?					
2. Reflecting on previous general elections since 2007, do you agree or disagree that the INEC chairperson and commissioners displayed independence from the federal government in organizing the:					
a. 2015 general elections?					
b. 2011 general elections?					
c. 2007 general elections?					
3. Do you agree or disagree that the INEC chairperson and commissioners were professional and competent in organizing the 2019 general elections?					
4. Reflecting on previous general elections since 2007, do you agree or disagree that the INEC chairperson and commissioners were professional and competent in organizing the:					
a. 2015 general elections?					
b. 2011 general elections?					
c. 2007 general elections?					
5. Do you agree or disagree that the INEC chairperson and commissioners were transparent and effectively communicated with the public and stakeholders during the 2019 general elections?					
6. Reflecting on previous general elections since 2007, do you agree or disagree that INEC chairperson and					

commissioners were transparent and effectively communicated with the public and stakeholders during the:					
a. 2015 general elections?					
b. 2011 general elections?					
c. 2007 general elections?					
7. Do you agree or disagree that INEC had sufficient financial resources to administer well-run general elections in 2019?					
8. Reflecting on previous general elections since 2007, do you agree or disagree that INEC had sufficient financial resources to administer well-run general elections in:					
a. 2015?					
b. 2011?					
c. 2007?					

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
9. Overall, how satisfied are you with the performance of the INEC chairperson and commissioners in organizing the 2019 general elections?					
10. Reflecting on previous general elections since 2007, how satisfied are you with the performance of the INEC chairperson and commissioners in organizing the following general elections:					
a. 2015 general elections?					
b. 2011 general elections?					
c. 2007 general elections?					

	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't Know
11. How much do you trust the INEC chairperson and commissioners to do what is in the best interest of the country?					
12. Reflecting on previous general elections since 2007, how much did you trust the INEC chairperson and commissioners to do what is in the best interest of the country in the:					
a. 2015 general elections?					
b. 2011 general elections?					
c. 2007 general elections?					

[SECTION 2: PERFORMANCE OF INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN ELECTION ADMINISTRATION]

13. Several institutions are instrumental in promoting electoral integrity. How satisfied are you with the performance of the following institutions in promoting the integrity of the 2019 elections?
--

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
a. Courts of law in pre-election matters					
b. Election Tribunals					
c. Domestic observers					
d. International observers					
e. Federal Government					
f. All Progressive Congress (APC)					
g. People Democratic Party (PDP)					
h. Other political parties					

SECTION 3: EVALUATIONS OF SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF INEC'S PERFORMANCE]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with different aspects of INEC's performance in recent general elections

[VOTER EDUCATION]

We will start with your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance in educating voters in recent general elections

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
14. How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of INEC's voter education programs to inform Nigerians about the voting process (e.g. where to vote, when to vote, how to cast your vote) in the 2019 general elections?					
15. How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of INEC's voter education programs to increase participation of marginalized populations (e.g. rural voters, minority language speakers, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons)?					

	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know
16. Has the effectiveness of INEC's voter education programs to inform Nigerians about the voting process increased, decreased, or stayed the same compared 2015?						
17. Has the effectiveness of INEC's voter education programs to increase participation of marginalized populations increased, decreased, or stayed the same compared 2015?						

18. Below is a list of reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve its voter education programs. How effective have these reforms been?	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/Haven't Heard Enough
a. Use of the Electoral Training Institute (TEI) to develop voter education material					
b. INEC website					
c. My INEC app					
d. Citizen Contact Center (ICCC)					
e. INEC Youth Ambassadors					
f. INEC collaboration with the National Orientation Agency (NOA)					
g. Periodic stakeholders' meeting/Town hall meetings					

19. Looking ahead to 2023 elections, which of the following do you consider most effective in improving INEC's voter education process?
Commence voter education earlier in the election period
Expand collaboration with NOA, CSOs, and political parties
Improve the design of the INEC website and make it the main point of information dissemination

[VOTER REGISTRATION]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance in registering voters in recent general elections

20. How satisfied are you with the accuracy of the 2019 voter register?					21. Has the accuracy of the 2019 voter register increased, decreased, or stayed the same compared 2015?					
Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know

22. How satisfied are you with the distribution of Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) during the 2019 elections?					23. Has the as the effectiveness of PVC distribution in 2019 increased, decreased, or stayed the same compared 2015?					
Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know

24. How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of the continuous voter registration process?					25. Has the effectiveness of the continuous voter registration process in 2019 increased, decreased, or stayed the same compared 2015?					
Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know

26. How satisfied are you with the adequacy of voter registration accommodations for Persons with Disabilities?				
Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know

27. Below is a list of reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve its voter registration process. How effective have these reforms been?					
	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/Haven't Heard Enough
a. Biometric voter registration					
b. Permanent voter cards					
c. Distribution of PVCs at the LGA level					

28. Looking ahead to 2023 elections, which of the following do you consider most effective in improving INEC's voter registration process?
Increase local PVC distribution points
Increase public information about PVC collection rates
Simplify procedures for transfer of registration location
Simplify procedures for replacing PVCs
Develop online voter registration system
Develop mobile registration centers to increase access for marginalized populations

[ELECTION SECURITY]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance in election security in recent general elections

29. How satisfied are you with INEC's coordination of security agencies during the 2019 general elections?					30. Has the effectiveness of INEC's coordination of security agencies in 2019 increased, decreased, or stayed the same compared 2015?					
Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know

31. How satisfied are you with the performance of the following agencies in the provision of election security?	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
a. Nigerian Police Force					
b. Nigerian Army					
c. Nigerian Navy					
d. Nigerian Airforce					
e. Nigerian Civil Defense Corps					
f. State Security Services					

32. Below are two reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve election security. How effective have these reforms been?

	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/ Haven't Heard Enough
a. Interagency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES)					
b. Cancellation of results in PUs affected by violence					

33. Looking ahead to 2023 elections, which of the following do you consider most effective in improving election security?
Improve funding for election security
Improve training of security personnel on election duties
Amend legal framework to institutionalize the ICCES structure
Improve oversight powers of ICCES
Nigeria Police should investigate all cases of electoral violence and prosecute offenders

[INEC RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TEMPORARY STAFF]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance in training and recruiting election day staff in recent general elections.

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
34. How satisfied are you with the recruitment process of ad hoc staff?					
35. How satisfied are you with the recruitment process of collation/returning officers?					

	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know
36. Did the effectiveness of the recruitment process of ad hoc staff in 2019 increase, decrease or stay the same compared to 2015?						
37. Did the effectiveness of the recruitment process of collation/returning officers in 2019 increase, decrease or stay the same compared to 2015?						

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
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38. How satisfied are you with the training of ad hoc staff?					
39. How satisfied are you with the training of collation/returning officers?					

	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know
40. Did the effectiveness of the training process for ad hoc staff in 2019 increase, decrease or stay the same compared to 2015?						
41. Did the effectiveness of the training process for collation/returning officers in 2019 increase, decrease or stay the same compared to 2015?						

42. Below is a list of reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve its recruitment and training of election day workers. How effective have these reforms been?						
	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/ Haven't Heard Enough	
a. Agreement with NYSC to recruit ad hoc staff						
b. Agreement with ASUU to recruit collation/returning officers						
c. Electronic Portal for Staff Recruitment (PRES): online system for the recruitment of permanent and ad hoc election officials.						
d. Electoral Institute (TEI): used to train INEC staff and develop training materials for ad hoc staff.						

43. Looking ahead to the 2023 elections, which of the following do you consider most effective in improving the recruitment and training of election-day workers?
Extended training for ad hoc staff on the use of smart card readers
Mandatory training for collation/registration officers
Improve remuneration and working conditions for ad hoc staff
Create a registry of trained polling officials
Review policy of recruiting only academics as returning officers

[ELECTION LOGISTICS]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance on election logistics in recent elections.

44. How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of INEC's procurement of sensitive election materials (e.g. ballot papers) during the 2019 elections?					45. Has the effectiveness of INEC's procurement of sensitive election materials (e.g. ballot papers) in 2019 increased, decreased, or stayed the same compared 2015?					
Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know

46. How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of INEC's distribution of sensitive election materials (e.g. ballot papers) during the 2019 elections?					47. Has the effectiveness of INEC's distribution of sensitive election materials in 2019 increased, decreased, or stayed the same compared 2015?					
Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know

48. Do you agree or disagree with INEC's decision to postpone the following elections					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
a. 2019 elections?					
b. 2015 elections?					
c. 2011 elections?					

49. There are several reasons for the postponement of the 2019 NASS and presidential elections, which of the following do you think is the most important cause of the postponement?	
Bad weather, which prevented the timely delivery of materials	
Burning of INEC's offices in Abia, Anambra, and Plateau states	
Poor logistical planning by INEC	
Manipulation by political parties	
Delay in the disbursement of INEC funds by the federal government	

50. Below is a list of reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve its logistics planning. How effective have these reforms been?	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/Haven't Heard Enough
a. Elections Operations Support Center (EOSC): used to track deployment of staff, materials, and card reader malfunctions.					
b. Election Monitoring and Support Center Committee (EMSC): used to track preparations for elections.					
c. National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW): used to transport election materials.					
d. INEC 2017-2021 Strategic Plan					

51. Looking ahead to 2023 elections, which of the following do you consider most effective in improving INEC's logistics planning?	
Independent review of logistics and procurement for 2019 elections	
Improve INEC's internal communication	
Improve the movement and tracking of election officials and election materials	

[ELECTION-DAY OPERATIONS]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance on election-day in recent general elections.

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
52. How satisfied are you with the use of the Registration Area Centre (RAC) for the storage, deployment and distribution of election materials and INEC personnel in the 2019 general elections?					
53. How satisfied are you with the use of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) vehicles to transport INEC materials and ad hoc staff?					
54. How satisfied are you with functioning of smart card readers on election-day?					
55. How satisfied are you with the consistent use of smart card readers by ad hoc staff to accredit voters?					
56. How satisfied are you with the ability of ad hoc staff to ensure orderly and safe voting process?					
57. How satisfied are you with the ability of ad hoc staff to ensure ballot secrecy?					
58. How satisfied are you with the adequacy of voting accommodations for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) (e.g. tactile ballots and braille guides)?					
59. How satisfied are you with the treatment of PWDs by INEC officials at polling units in the 2019 general elections?					
60. How satisfied are you with the competence of the ad hoc staff					
61. How satisfied are you with impartiality of the ad hoc staff					

62. Below is a list of reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve the election-day operations. How effective have these reforms been?	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/Haven't Heard Enough
a. Simultaneous accreditation and voting					
b. Creation of voting points					

c. Prohibition of cell phones in voting cubicles					
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63. Looking ahead to the 2023 elections, which of the following do you consider most effective in improving election-day operations
Delimitation of constituency boundaries
Convert voting points into polling units
Improve smart card reader hardware and software
Develop procedures for voting for election-day workers
Introduce priority voting for vulnerable population (e.g. elderly, pregnant women, nursing mothers and people with disabilities)

[RESULTS COLLATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance in counting, collating and announcing results in recent general elections.

64. How satisfied are you with INEC's transparency in counting and positing results at PUs in 2019?					65. Has INEC's transparency in counting and positing results at PUs in 2019 increased, decreased, or stayed the same compared 2015?					
Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know

66. How satisfied are you with INEC's transparency in collating and announcing certified results?					67. Has INEC's transparency in collating and announcing certified results in 2019 increased, decreased, or stayed the same compared 2015?					
Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
68. How satisfied are you with INEC's transparency in cancelling polling station results and declaring elections inconclusive?					
69. How satisfied are your with INEC's ability to make disaggregated election results publicly available?					

70. Below is a list of reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve its results counting, collation, and announcement processes. How effective have these reforms been?	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/ Haven't Heard Enough
a. Margin of lead principle					

b. National collation center for presidential elections					
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71. Looking ahead to the 2023 elections, which of the following may be most effective in improving the results counting, collation, and announcement processes?
Amend legislation to allow for the electronic transmission of results
Develop electronic results transmission system
Scan results from all levels of collation and post on INEC website when results are declared
Display of lower level results at collation centers
Conduct a post-election audit
Amend legal framework to limit power of returning officer to cancel results due to violence

[SECTION 5: EVALUATIONS OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY]

72. Taking all aspects of the pre-election period, election day, and the post-election process into account, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the:	Not free and fair	Free and fair, with major problems	Free and fair, with minor problems	Completely Free and Fair	Don't Know
c. 2019 general elections?					
d. 2015 general elections?					
e. 2011 general elections?					
f. 2007 general elections?					

73. There are several problems that can arise during the pre-election period, election-day and post-election process that may influence the integrity of elections. For each of the following problems, can you please tell me if it was widespread, somewhat frequent, isolated or non-existent in the 2019 general elections.	Widespread	Somewhat frequent	Isolated	Non-existent	Don't Know
a. Use of violence and intimidation by political parties targeted at voters and INEC officials					
b. Use of violence and intimidation by state/federal security agencies targeted at voters and INEC officials					
c. Use of hate speech by political parties					
d. Disruption of campaign rallies by rival political parties					
e. Vote buying and turnout buying					
f. Under age voting					
g. Accreditation and voting without card readers					
h. Manipulation of polling unit results by INEC officials					
i. Manipulation of polling unit results by political parties					

j. Manipulation of collation-level results by INEC officials					
k. The illegal use of federal/state government resources for campaigning by political parties					
l. Biased coverage of incumbent party by federal/state government-owned media					

[SECTION 6: DEMOGRAPHICS]

Now we would like to ask you a few questions about your background.

74. Overall, how knowledgeable are you about the 2019 general elections?	Not at all knowledgeable	Not too knowledgeable	Fairly knowledgeable	Completely knowledgeable	Don't Know	Refused
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75. What is your gender?	
76. What is your age?	

77. What is your highest level of education completed?	
Primary school completed	
Some secondary school / high school	
Secondary school / high school completed	
Post-secondary qualifications, other than university e.g. a diploma or degree from a polytechnic or college	
Some university	
University completed	
Post graduate	

78. What is your country of origin?	
Nigeria	
Other	

79. What is your state of origin?					
Abia	1	Enugu	14	Niger	27
Adamawa	2	FCT	15	Ogun	28
Akwa-Ibom	3	Gombe	16	Ondo	29

Anambra	4	Imo	17	Osun	30
Bauchi	5	Jigawa	18	Oyo	31
Bayelsa	6	Kaduna	19	Plateau	32
Benue	7	Kano	20	Rivers	33
Borno	8	Katsina	21	Sokoto	34
Cross-River	9	Kebbi	22	Taraba	35
Delta	10	Kogi	23	Yobe	36
Ebonyi	11	Kwara	24	Zamfara	37
Edo	12	Lagos	25	Don't know]	98
Ekiti	13	Nasarawa	26	Refused	99

80. What is your religion?		
Christian only (respondent does not identify sub-group)		1
Roman Catholic		2
Orthodox		3
Protestant		4
Jehovah's Witness		5
Seventh Day Adventist		6
Mormon		7
Muslim only (respondent does not identify sub-group)		8
Sunni		9
Shia		10
Traditional		11
Not religious		96
Other [Specify]		97
Refused		99

81. What is your ethnic community?			
Hausa	1	Idoma	16
Igbo	2	Itsekiri	17

Yoruba	3	Ikwerre	18
Efik	4	Awori	19
Ebira	5	Tapa	20
Fulani	6	Kalabari	21
Isoko	7	Birom	22
Ibibio	8	Shuwa-Arab	23
Kanuri	9	Jukun	24
Tiv	10	Gwari	25
Nupe	11	Nigerian only, or “doesn’t think of self in those terms”	26
Ijaw	12	Other[specify]	97
Edo	13	Don’t know	98
Igala	14	Refused to answer	99
Urhobo	15		

82. Are you currently in full or part-time employment?	
Full-time paid employment (30+ hours/week)	
Part-time paid employment (less than 30 hours per week)	
Not currently in paid employment	
Not applicable/Don't know	

83. Did you participate in the 2019 elections in any of the following roles?	
Worked for a party/candidate in any capacity	
Election official	
International observer	
Domestic observer	
Voted	
No, I did not participate in any of these roles	

APPENDIX 7: STATE LEVEL EXPERT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

[Introductory Script]

Thank you for participating in this brief online survey. You have been selected based on your knowledge of Nigeria's electoral processes and systems. This survey will collect information about your opinions on the quality of elections and election management in Nigeria. Completing this survey should take about 30 minutes.

No findings will be attributed to respondents by name. You have the right to say no to participating in this survey. If you have any questions about this survey or how the information you provide will be used, you may contact Dr. Nicholas Kerr, Principal Researcher via email: nicholaskerr@ufl.edu

	Yes	No
1. Do you agree to participate?		

[Section I: Principles of Election Management: State INEC Commissions]

We would like to start with a few statements about INEC and its Resident Electoral Commissioner in recent elections in [STATE*]. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
2. Do you agree or disagree that the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) and senior staff in [STATE*] displayed independence from the state government when organizing the 2019 general elections?					

	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know
3. Has the independence of the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) and senior staff in [STATE*] in 2019 increased, decreased or stayed the same compared to the 2015 elections?						

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	
4. Do you agree or disagree that the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) and senior staff in [STATE*] were professional and competent in organizing the 2019 elections?						
	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know
5. Has the competence and professionalism of the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) and senior staff in [STATE*] in 2019						

increased, decreased or stayed the same compared to the 2015 elections?						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	
6. Do you agree or disagree that the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) and senior staff in [STATE*] were transparent and effectively communicated with the public and stakeholders during the 2019 elections?						
	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know
7. Has the transparency of the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) and senior staff in [STATE*] in 2019 increased, decreased or stayed the same compared to the 2015 elections?						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	
8. Do you agree or disagree that INEC in [STATE*] had sufficient financial resources to administer well-run general elections in 2019?						
	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know
9. Has the financial capacity of the INEC in [STATE*] in 2019 increased, decreased or stayed the same compared to the 2015 elections?						
	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know	
10. Overall how satisfied are you with the performance of the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) and senior staff in [STATE*] in organizing the 2019 elections?						
	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know
11. Has your satisfaction with the performance of the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) and senior staff in [STATE*] in 2019 increased, decreased or stayed the same compared to the 2015 elections?						

	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't Know	
12. How much do you trust the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) and senior staff to do what is in the best interest of the [STATE*]?						
	Decreased a lot	Decreased Somewhat	Stayed the same	Increased Somewhat	Increased a lot	Don't Know
3. Has your trust in the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) and senior staff in [STATE*] in 2019 increased, decreased or stayed the same compared to the 2015 elections?						

[SECTION 2: PERFORMANCE OF INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN ELECTIONS]

14. How satisfied are you with the performance of the following institutions in promoting the integrity of the 2019 elections in [STATE*]						
	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know	
a. Courts of law in pre-election matters						
b. Election Tribunals						
c. Domestic observers						
d. International observers						
e. Federal Government						
f. All Progressive Congress (APC)						
g. People Democratic Party (PDP)						
h. Other Political Parties						

[SECTION 3: EVALUATIONS OF INEC PERFORMANCE IN {STATE*}]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with different aspects of INEC's performance in [STATE*] during the 2019 general elections

[VOTER EDUCATION]

We will start with your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance in educating voters in [STATE*] during the 2019 general elections

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
15. How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of INEC's voter education program to inform Nigerians about the voting process (e.g. where to vote, when to vote, how to cast your vote)?					
16. How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of INEC's voter education programs to increase participation of marginalized populations (e.g. rural voters, minority language speakers, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons)?					

17. Below is a list of reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve its voter education programs. How effective have these reforms been in [STATE*]?	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/ Haven't Heard Enough
a. Use of the Electoral Training Institute (TEI) to develop voter education material					
b. INEC website					
c. My INEC app					
d. Citizen Contact Center (ICCC)					
e. INEC Youth Ambassadors					
f. INEC collaboration with the National Orientation Agency (NOA)					
g. Periodic stakeholders' meeting/Town hall meetings					

18. Looking ahead to 2023 elections, which of the following do you consider most effective in improving INEC's voter education process?
Commence voter education earlier in the election period
Expand collaboration with NOA, CSOs, and political parties
Improve the design of the INEC website and make it the main point of information dissemination

[VOTER REGISTRATION]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance in registering voters in [STATE*] during the 2019 elections

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
19. How satisfied are you with the accuracy of the 2019 voter register?					
20. How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of the continuous voter registration process?					
21. How satisfied are you with the distribution of PVC during the 2019 process?					
22. How satisfied are you with the adequacy of voter registration accommodations for Persons with Disabilities?					

23. Below is a list of reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve its voter registration process. How effective have these reforms been?					
	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/ Haven't Heard Enough
d. Biometric voter registration					
e. Permanent voter cards					
f. Distribution of PVCs at the LGA level					

24. Looking ahead to 2023 elections, which of the following do you consider most effective in improving INEC's voter registration process?
Increase local PVC distribution points
Increase public information about PVC collection rates
Simplify procedures for transfer of registration location
Simplify procedures for replacing PVCs
Develop online voter registration system
Develop mobile registration centers to increase access for marginalized populations

[ELECTION SECURITY]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance in coordinating election security in [STATE*] during the 2019 general elections

25. How satisfied are you with INEC's coordination of security agencies during the 2019 elections?				
Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know

26. How satisfied are you with the performance of the following agencies in the provision of security on election day?					
	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
a. Nigeria Police Force					
b. Nigerian Army					
c. Nigerian Navy					
d. Nigerian Airforce					
e. Nigerian Civil Defense Corps					
f. State Security Services					

[INEC RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TEMPORARY STAFF]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance in training and recruiting election day staff in [STATE*] during 2019 elections.

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
27. How satisfied are you with the recruitment process of ad hoc staff?					
28. How satisfied are you with the training of ad hoc staff?					
29. How satisfied are you with the distribution of allowances for ad hoc staff?					
30. How satisfied are you with the recruitment process of collation/returning officers?					
31. How satisfied are you with the training of collation/returning officers?					

32. Below is a list of reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve its recruitment and training of election day workers. How effective have these reforms been?					
	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/ Haven't Heard Enough
a. Agreement with NYSC to recruit ad hoc staff					

b. Agreement with ASUU to recruit collation/returning officers					
c. Electronic Portal for Staff Recruitment (PRES): online system for the recruitment of permanent and ad hoc election officials.					
d. Electoral Institute (TEI): used to train INEC staff and develop training materials for ad hoc staff.					

[ELECTION LOGISTICS]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance on election logistics in [STATE*] during the 2019 elections.

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
33. How satisfied are you with the use of the Registration Area Centre (RAC) for the storage, deployment and distribution of election materials and INEC personnel?					
34. How satisfied are you with the use of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) vehicles to transport INEC materials and ad hoc staff?					

35. Do you agree or disagree with INEC's decision to postpone the following elections:					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
d. 2019 elections?					
e. 2015 elections?					
f. 2011 elections?					

36. There are several reasons for the postponement of the 2019 NASS and presidential elections, which of the following do you think is the most important cause of the postponement?	
Bad weather, which prevented the timely delivery of materials	
Burning of INEC's offices in Abia, Anambra, and Plateau states	
Poor logistical planning by INEC	
Manipulation by political parties	
Delay in the disbursement of INEC funds by the federal government	

[ELECTION-DAY OPERATIONS]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance on election-day in [STATE*] during the 2019 elections.

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
37. How satisfied are you with functioning of smart card readers on election-day?					
38. How satisfied are you with the consistent use of smart card readers by ad hoc staff to accredit voters?					
39. How satisfied are you with the ability of ad hoc staff to ensure orderly and safe voting process?					
40. How satisfied are you with the ability of ad hoc staff to ensure ballot secrecy?					
41. How satisfied are you with the adequacy of voting accommodations for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) (e.g. tactile ballots and braille guides)?					
42. How satisfied are you with the treatment of PWDs by INEC officials at polling units in the 2019 general elections?					
43. How satisfied are you with the competence of ad hoc staff					
44. How satisfied are you with impartiality of ad hoc staff					

45. Below is a list of reforms adopted and implemented by INEC since 2011 to improve the election-day operations. How effective have these reforms been?					
	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Fairly effective	Very effective	Don't Know/ Haven't Heard Enough
d. Simultaneous accreditation and voting					
e. Creation of voting points					
f. Prohibition of cell phones in voting cubicles					

46. Looking ahead to the 2023 elections, which of the following do you consider most effective in improving election-day operations
Delimitation of constituency boundaries
Convert voting points into polling units
Improve smart card reader hardware and software

Develop procedures for voting for election-day workers
Introduce priority voting for vulnerable population (e.g. elderly, pregnant women, nursing mothers and people with disabilities)

[RESULTS COLLATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT]

Next, we would like to know your level of satisfaction with INEC's performance in counting, collating and announcing results in [STATE*] during 2019 general elections?

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
47. How satisfied are you with INEC's transparency in counting and positing results at PUs?					
48. How satisfied are you with INEC's transparency in collating and announcing certified results?					
49. How satisfied are you with INEC's transparency in cancelling polling station results and declaring elections inconclusive?					
50. How satisfied are your with INEC's ability to make disaggregated election results publicly available?					
51. How satisfied are you with the competence of collation/returning officers?					
52. How satisfied are you with impartiality of collation/returning officers?					

53. Looking ahead to the 2023 elections, which of the following may be most effective in improving the results counting, collation, and announcement processes?
Amend legislation to allow for the electronic transmission of results
Develop electronic results transmission system
Scan results from all levels of collation and post on INEC website when results are declared.
Display of lower level results at collation centers
Conduct a post-election audit
Amend legal framework to limit power of returning officer to cancel results due to violence

[SECTION 5: EVALUATIONS OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY]

Now we would like to ask a few questions about the credibility of the electoral process in [STATE*] during 2019 general elections?

	Not free and fair	Free and fair, with major problems	Free and fair, with minor problems	Completely Free and Fair	Don't Know
54. Taking all aspects of the pre-election period, election day, and the post-election process into account, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the 2019 general elections in [STATE*]?					
55. Taking all aspects of the pre-election period, election day, and the post-election process into account, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the 2015 general elections in [STATE*]?					

56. There are several problems that can arise during the pre-election period, election-day and post-election process that may influence the quality of the elections. For each of the following problems, can you please tell me if they were widespread, isolated, very limited or non-existent in the 2019 elections in [STATE*].					
	Widespread	Somewhat frequent	Isolated	Non-existent	Don't Know
a. Use of violence and intimidation by political parties targeted at voters and INEC officials					
b. Use of violence and intimidation by state/federal security agencies targeted at voters and INEC officials					
c. Use of hate speech by political parties					
d. Disruption of campaign rallies by rival political parties					
e. Vote buying and turnout buying					
f. Under age voting					
g. Accreditation and voting without card readers					
h. Manipulation of polling unit results by INEC officials					
i. Manipulation of polling unit results by political parties					
j. Manipulation of collation-level results by INEC officials					
k. The illegal use of federal/state government resources for campaigning by political parties					
l. Biased coverage of incumbent party by federal/state government-owned media					

[SECTION 6: LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL ELECTIONS (ADMINISTERED BY SIEC)]

57. Do you know when the last local government council elections were held in [STATE*]? Please select the year.	
2020	
2019	
2018	
2017	
2016	
2015	
2014	
2013	
2012	
2011	

58. Overall, how knowledgeable are you about the local council elections [{STATE*}] in [{DATE*}]?						
Not at all knowledgeable	Not too knowledgeable	Fairly knowledgeable	Completely knowledgeable	Don't Know	Refused	

Now we would like to continue with a few questions concerning the State Independent Electoral Commission and recent local government council elections in [{STATE*}].

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
59. Do you agree or disagree that the SIEC chairperson and commissioners displayed independence from the state government when organizing the elections [{STATE*}] in [{DATE*}]?					
60. Do you agree or disagree that the SIEC chairperson and commissioners were professional and competent in organizing the elections [{STATE*}] in [{DATE*}]?					
61. Do you agree or disagree that the SIEC chairperson and commissioners were transparent and effectively communicated with the public and stakeholders when organizing the elections [{STATE*}] in [{DATE*}]?					
62. Do you agree or disagree that the SIEC in [{STATE*}] had sufficient financial resources to administer a well-run local government council election in [{DATE*}]?					
63. Do you agree or disagree that in the future INEC should have the right to supervise local government elections instead of the State Electoral Independent Commission?					

	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't Know
64. Overall how satisfied are you with the performance of the SIEC chairperson and commissioners in [{STATE*}] in organizing the local government council elections in [{DATE*}] ?					

	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't Know
65. How much do you trust the SIEC chairperson and commissioners to do what is in the best interest of the [{STATE*}]?					

	Not free and fair	Free and fair, with major problems	Free and fair, with minor problems	Completely Free and Fair	Don't Know
66. Taking all aspects of the pre-election period, election day, and the post-election process into account, would you consider the [{STATE*}] local government council elections in {DATE*} to be free and fair?					

[SECTION 7: DEMOGRAPHICS]

Now we would like to ask you a few questions about your background?

67. What is your gender?	
68. What is your age?	

69. What is your highest level of education completed?
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Primary school completed	
Some secondary school / high school	
Secondary school / high school completed	
Post-secondary qualifications, other than university e.g. a diploma or degree from a polytechnic or college	
Some university	
University completed	
Post graduate	

70. What is your country of origin?	
Nigeria	
Other	

71. What is your state of origin?					
Abia	1	Enugu	14	Niger	27
Adamawa	2	FCT	15	Ogun	28
Akwa-Ibom	3	Gombe	16	Ondo	29

Anambra	4	Imo	17	Osun	30
Bauchi	5	Jigawa	18	Oyo	31
Bayelsa	6	Kaduna	19	Plateau	32
Benue	7	Kano	20	Rivers	33
Borno	8	Katsina	21	Sokoto	34
Cross-River	9	Kebbi	22	Taraba	35
Delta	10	Kogi	23	Yobe	36
Ebonyi	11	Kwara	24	Zamfara	37
Edo	12	Lagos	25	Don't know	98
Ekiti	13	Nasarawa	26	Refused	99

72. What is your religion?		
Christian only (respondent does not identify sub-group)		1
Roman Catholic		2
Orthodox		3
Protestant		4
Jehovah's Witness		5
Seventh Day Adventist		6
Mormon		7
Muslim only (respondent does not identify sub-group)		8
Sunni		9
Shia		10
Traditional		11
Not religious		96
Other [Specify]		97
Refused to answer		99

73. What is your ethnic community?			
Hausa	1	Idoma	16
Igbo	2	Itsekiri	17

Yoruba	3	Ikwerre	18
Efik	4	Awori	19
Ebira	5	Tapa	20
Fulani	6	Kalabari	21
Isoko	7	Birom	22
Ibibio	8	Shuwa-Arab	23
Kanuri	9	Jukun	24
Tiv	10	Gwari	25
Nupe	11	Nigerian only, or “doesn’t think of self in those terms”	26
Ijaw	12	Other[specify]	97
Edo	13	Don’t know	98
Igala	14	Refused to answer	99
Urhobo	15		

74. Are you currently in full or part-time employment?	
Full-time paid employment (30+ hours/week)	
Part-time paid employment (less than 30 hours per week)	
Not currently in paid employment	
Not applicable/Don't know	

75. Did you participate in the 2019 elections in any of the following roles?	
Worked for a party/candidate in any capacity	
Election official	
International observer	
Domestic observer	
Voted	
No, I did not participate in any of these roles	

76. Besides [STATE*] are you an expert in any other state?
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